Destination Branding as an Informational Signal and Its Influence on Satisfaction and Loyalty in the Leisure Tourism Market

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
In partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Hospitality and Tourism Management

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June 28, 2006
Blacksburg, Virginia

Keyword: Destination Branding, Destination image, Perceived Quality, Destination Awareness, Satisfaction, Loyalty, Leisure Tourism Market, Structural Equation Modeling

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ABSTRACT

This study provides an integrated approach to understanding the relationship between destination branding and tourist behavior, and attempts to extend the theoretical and empirical evidence about the structural relationships among the following constructs: destination image, perceived quality, destination awareness (elements of destination branding), tourist satisfaction, and tourist loyalty (elements of tourist behavior) in the leisure tourism market. This study develops and empirically tests a destination branding model and its relevant components from the perspectives of tourists, so that it will help destination marketers to build more competitive tourism destinations.

The destination brand model is based on relationship marketing theory, signaling theory, and brand equity theory. The model proposed four major hypotheses: 1) destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty; 2) destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction; 3) tourist satisfaction has a positive influence on tourist loyalty; and 4) the relationship between destination branding and tourist satisfaction is moderated by trip types.

A sample population consisting of residents of Virginia was surveyed. A stratified sampling method and a random sampling method were used to select the sample. A total of 304 usable questionnaires out of 2,000 questionnaires were collected. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to test hypotheses in this study.

The results revealed that: 1) cognitive destination image and destination familiarity had a direct influence on tourist loyalty as well as an indirect influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction; 2) affective destination image had only an indirect impact on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction; 3) tourist satisfaction had a significant

relationship with tourist loyalty; and 4) cognitive destination image, affective destination image, and destination recognition were moderated by trip types.

This study can initiate the development of theoretical foundations for destination branding. Also, the implications of these findings can help destination managers and marketers build competitive strategies for destination branding in order to ensure long-term relationships between tourists and their destinations.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife, Sunhee Hong, my daughter, Eun, my parents and parents-in-law, and my mother in Heaven. Without their sacrifices and undying support I could have never fulfilled my dreams.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Above all, I give thanks to my heavenly Father, God, my Savor, Jesus Christ, and my Comforter, Holy Sprit for the grace and the love throughout my life. Without God's grace, I could not have come this far. I praise and worship God, my Lord!

I appreciate every effort made by my committee members, Dr. Muzaffer Uysal, Dr. Nancy McGehee, Dr. Ken McCleary, Dr. James Littlefield, and Dr. Brian Mihalik, throughout my dissertation. Working with my harmonious committee members has been always stimulating and enjoyable.

Dr. Muzaffer Uysal, my committee chairman and godfather, has been an inspiration and a mentor for me throughout my doctoral pursuit. I would like to thank him for his strong guidance and support during my research. He did not hesitate to give fruitful advice and did not forget to say "good job" whenever I brought him my ideas. The words "good job" encouraged me to accomplish my dissertation. I would like to thank Dr. Nancy McGehee, my co-chair, for her warm concern and creative input during my research. Her excellent advice and continued support have allowed me to develop my research capabilities and writing skills.

I would like to thank Dr. Ken McCleary for his excellent advice and encouragement. His kind suggestions and guidance improved the quality of my dissertation. I also wish to thank Dr. James Littlefield and Dr. Brian Mihalik for their research knowledge and experience. Their comments and suggestions for improvements to my dissertation are highly valued and gratefully acknowledged.

Dr. Seehyung Kim, Dr. Sungpil Hahm, and Dr. Yooshik Yoon gave me valuable direction in developing my research and contributed many helpful ideas to improve my academic and personal life. Hayoung Lee, Sunghyup Hyun, Gyumin Lee, Seungwoo Lee, and Fang Meng, my friends, encouraged me and helped me in the most practical ways. I would like to thank other graduate students in the department of Hospitality and Tourism Management for having a wonderful time with me.

I would like to give special thanks to my pastor, Dr. Hyun David Chung, and his family for their prayers and fellowship in God. I thank my sincere brothers and their families of the Korean Baptist Church of Blacksburg (KBCB). Especially, I would like to recognize: Dr. Kyungkyoon Bae, Dr. Jong Nam Lee, Kanguk Lee, Hongman Kim, Maengjoo Lee, Sung Yeul Park, Keehoon Lee, Jeonghoon Kim, Jungsoo Kim, Yonghan Kang, and Yunhyun Kim. My family and I have spent valuable times with them in love and joy.

I wish to thank the members of Korean Graduate Basketball (KGB) for playing basketball on every Friday and having a good time whenever I was stressed from my research. Particularly, I would like to recognize: Dr. Sang-Mook Lee, Younghan Jung, Gwibo Byun, Sangjun Park, Minjae Lee, Pong-Gun Song, Myungbae Lee, KaeYoung Shin, Sejin Kim, Hyunsun Do, and Dong Ryul Lee. Without their sincere membership, I could not have retained my mental and physical health.

I cannot imagine that I could have been here without my parents' prayers and support. I really thank them for the love, caring and sacrifices they have made for their children. Their endless and unconditional love has been my biggest support throughout my life. I also thank my parents-in-law for their love and support. I cannot forget my brother, sister, brothers-in-law, and sisters-in-law for their love and encouragement. I also wish to thank my friends, Bongwoo Kim, Hyunchul Kim, Sungtae Moon, Bonggi Choi, Jaeho Kim, for their mental and financial support. I am deeply grateful to my wife, Sunhee Hong. Without her love, prayers, patience, and support, I would not have been able to finish my Ph.D. work. My special thanks go to my daughter, Eun, for giving me such joy during the tough times as a Ph.D. student. I really love you. Finally, I would like to thank my mother in Heaven. I miss you very much!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS 111

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study provides an integrated approach to understanding the relationship between destination branding and tourist behavior, and attempts to extend the theoretical and empirical evidence about the structural relationships among the following constructs: destination image, perceived quality, destination awareness (elements of destination branding), tourist satisfaction, and tourist loyalty (elements of tourist behavior). The five constructs are assessed as critical sources of testing the proposed structural model in this study. This study develops and empirically tests a destination brand model and its relevant components from the perspectives of tourists, so that it will help destination marketers to build more competitive tourism destinations.

The basic premise of the study is that tourist loyalty about a destination represents an important source of income for the destination marketers, and loyalty depends on satisfied tourists and recognizable destination branding. Because destination branding enables tourists to identify the image, perceived quality, and awareness of a destination, destination branding can influence tourist satisfaction and loyalty. Therefore, the choice of destination brand and tourist loyalty have important implications for tourism industry's marketing mix consisting of product, pricing, promotion, distribution strategies.

1.2 **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Tourism as a business has grown into one of the largest income generators worldwide (Bonn, Joseph, & Dai, 2005). According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) which has been measuring the economic impact of travel and tourism for the world, regions, and Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries since 1991, the world travel and tourism economy's contribution to gross domestic production is expected to total 10.6 percent ($4.7 trillion) in 2005 and rise to 11.3 percent ($7.8 trillion) in 2015. Also, the tourism industry was expected to generate over 221 million jobs in 2005 and is projected to grow to over 269 million jobs by 2005. On the basis of World Travel Organization data, international tourism activity has shown a steady growth of 7.1 percent per year, from 25 million arrivals in 1950 to 760 million arrivals in 2004. If steady growth continues, international tourist arrivals are expected to reach 1 billion by 2010, and exceed 1.6 billion by 2020.

According to the Travel Industry Association of America (TIA, 2004), the U.S. travel industry received more than $600.1 billion from domestic and international travelers (including international passenger fares). These travel expenditures generated nearly 7.2 million jobs for America, with $158.4 billion in payroll income. Approximately one of every eighteen U. S. residents in the civilian labor force was employed due to direct travel spending in the U.S. during 2004. Tourist spending in the U. S. is projected to total $633.5 billion in 2005, and $662.0 billion in 2006.

Recently, the leisure tourism market has grown as a major international business, because increased real disposable income, longer holidays with pay, improved opportunities for mobility, better education and wider dissemination of information have all contributed toward changing people's attitudes about taking their leisure time away from home (Goodall 1990). For example, the number of the U. S. leisure travelers has increased from 895.5 million in 2001 to 942.5 in 2004, while U.S. business travelers have decreased in number from 153.1 million in 2001 to 145.1 million in 2004 (TIA, 2005). The leisure tourism market generated $2.8 trillion in 2005, and is expected to generate $4.6 trillion in 2015 (WTTC, 2005). With this increased success, the market has expanded and grown into a fiercely competitive arena with tourism destination marketing organizations attracting tourists to their respective destinations.

Therefore, tourism destinations, just like other consumer products, have the need to brand, that is to create a unique identity to differentiate themselves from competitors (Morgan & Pritchard 2003; Morgan, Pritchard, & Piggott 2002). In this regard, branding is thought to be one of the most effective tools available to marketers. Also, branding is the most powerful marketing weapon and informational signal available to contemporary destination marketers confronted by increasing competition (Morgan & Pritchard, 2002). Because of the importance of branding, the concept of destination branding has become an increasingly important topic among destination marketers. Both researchers and practitioners emphasize the importance of image creation and destination differentiation as integral elements in building a strong destination brand (Blain, Levy, & Ritchie 2005).

Furthermore, because the enhanced awareness of the importance of branding as a strategic marketing activity has given rise to an increasing interest in the potential contribution of branding to business development, destination branding as a concept is increasingly being applied to countries (Anholt 2002; Brown, Chalip, Jago, & Mules 2004; Gilmore 2001; Hall 2002; Kotler & Gertner 2002; Martinovic 2002; Ooi 2004;

Piggott, Morgan, & Pritchard 2004; Pride 2002; Pritchard & Morgan 1998, 2002; Ryan & Simons 1998; Ryan & Zahra 2002), States (Curtis 2000; Fiveash 1998; Lee, Cai, O'Leary 2005; Nickerson & Moisey 1999; Slater 2002), cities (Evans 2003; Gilmore 2004; Hankinson 2001; Reeh 1998; Smith 2004; Vesey & Dimanche 1998), as well as regions (Cai 2002; Crockett & Wood 2002; Orth & Tureckova 2001). These studies of destination branding have explored the opportunities and the challenges of destination branding.

Anholt (2002) illustrated how successful nation brands provided trust, quality, and lifestyle connotations with which consumers could associate. He not only demonstrated that a nation's image could profoundly shape its economic, cultural and political destiny, but also that changing national reputations and building brands were difficult, complex and long-term challenges which require honesty, objectivity and above all, an empathetic understanding of the consumers' mindspace. Thus, he suggested that nation brand markets should be able effectively to utilize and capitalize on consumers' perception of a destination.

Pritchard and Morgan (1998) briefly discussed the role of branding in destination marketing and evaluated whether destinations can be branded as other goods and services. They focused on a case study, discussing how Wales tried to brand in its key overseas market of the USA. This study explained that Wales adopted strategies whose main goal could be described as the creation of brand saliency-the development of an emotional relationship with the consumer through highly choreographed and focused communications campaigns. Also, it illustrated how destination managers in Wales could overcome three unique challenges in the branding initiatives, including a lack of control over the total marketing mix, relatively limited budgets, and political considerations.

Subsequently, Pritchard and Morgan (2001) developed a critical analysis of tourism representations through an investigation of destination branding strategies. Based on an analysis of the marketing campaigns of the Wales Tourist Board and Welsh local authorities, their study argued that the influence of repressive and liberating historical, political and cultural discourses could be discerned in the tourism representations used in contemporary branding strategies, and that these explained why Wales was differentially branded in its overseas and UK markets.

Crockett and Wood (2002) explained how, based on intensive consumer research, government-industry partnerships, and infra-structural developments, the state went beyond tourism to create a state brand. They concluded that a successful destination brand must embrace a host of activities, including infra-structural development, product enhancement, protection against environmental degradation, changes in organizational culture and promotional partnerships, all based on intensive market research identifying consumers' desires.

Slater (2002) explained how Louisiana continued to develop its powerful travel destination brand. Louisiana has wholeheartedly embraced branding to communicate and emphasized the 'feel' and 'personality' of the destination. Although it had many attractions, it was its brand identity that has positioned the state as one of the fastest growing tourism destination in the United States. He concluded that the key to success was the power behind the Louisiana brand (built around food, culture, music, scenery, architecture, and history), a substantial advertising budget, well-targeted media placements and an effective integrated campaign with advertising as its cornerstone.

Morgan, Pritchard, and Piggott (2003) explored the context and creation of the New Zealand brand and focused particularly on the political processes involved in successful brand management and on the vital role of public and private sector stakeholders. They identified the stakeholders crucial to the delivery of the destination brand and examined the positioning process and the creation of its largely web-driven strategy. They concluded that through stakeholder partnerships and the harnessing of non-traditional media, Tourism New Zealand (TNZ) has been able to create a powerful travel destination brand, positioned as an appealing niche player in the global tourism industry.

Brown et al. (2004) focused on the relationship between destination branding, events, and the media in Australia. They discussed the growing importance of event tourism and examined the nature of destination image in the context of conceptual and applied framework. Additionally, they considered the implication of the Sydney Olympic Games on Brand Australia and provided how Australia destination marketers shrewdly harnessed the global reach of the Games to promote not only Sydney's, but the whole of Australia's tourism image to the world. Their study clearly demonstrated how the 'best ever games" were used to advance Brand Australia strategically.

According to Ooi (2004), Singapore is regarded as the capital and hub of the New Asia; the gateway which tourists should visit or pass through when they are in the region. He explained that the "New Asia-Singapore" brand embraced the regional brand and strategy, as well as provided a focused marketing direction for the destination as a stand-alone place. He emphasized the importance of materializing the brand expectations, discussing how Singapore made “New Asia-Singapore” live by directing tourists’ attention to the Asia in the largely modern city that is Singapore.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Brands play an integral part in marketing strategy and are increasingly seen as valuable assets and sources of differentiation (Lim & O’Cass 2001). Also, various aspects of branding are the subject of many academic studies, but most of the literature focuses on consumer goods and grocery products (Morgan & Pritchard 1999; Cai 2002). While brands are found in many categories of tourism products and services and permeate almost all facets of tourist activities, branding is practiced less vigorously in destination marketing than in general marketing areas (Cai 2002; Lee et al. 2005). That is, while the branding of goods and services is well documented in the generic marketing literature, the application of branding techniques and practices to tourist destinations is still in its infancy (Gnoth 1998; Cai 2002).

Furthermore, even if there are many studies of destination branding, it has attracted relatively little interest in the academic literature, because branding certain destinations at the national, state, and city level is regarded as complex at best and impossible at worst (Morgan Pritchard, and Pride, 2002). Williams and Palmer (1999) argued that the need for more research was critical in light of the observed difficulties in implementing destination branding. They found that the diversity and complexity of tourism products made information provision difficult for both national and regional tourism organizations. Consequently, branding a region, a country, or a state can be very difficult and often cumbersome.

Many studies have recently attempted to contribute to the process of adapting and integrating branding concepts from the mainstream marketing literature into the tourism management literature, and more specifically, into the literature directly addressing the concerns of destination management. However, although the level of studies regarding destination branding is substantial and growing, the studies do not appear to be supported by the same level of conceptual and measurement rigor that has characterized the generic field of branding (Ritchie & Ritchie 1998). That is, previous studies about destination branding do not have a theoretical and conceptual framework. Morgan and Pritchard (1999) pointed out that there was a research gap in destination branding in terms of how its principles were translated into practical marketing activity and in how to conceptualize the empirical analysis of the application of branding to tourism products. A well-recognized conceptual framework that facilitates empirical research is still hard to identify.

There are two issues, including definitional problems and interchangeable use of the terms branding (destination branding) and brand image (destination image), at the conceptual level. In other words, although the terms brand and branding appear or are alluded to in many studies of destination image, there are no apparent efforts to distinguish between formation of a destination image and the branding of the destination. The two concepts are not obviously delineated in many studies. Nickerson and Moisey (1999) defined branding as "what images people have of the state and what kind of relationship they have with it." Hall (1999) cited the definition of a brand in general marketing terms but stopped short of defining what destination branding was, only specifying its core objective as "producing a consistent, focused communication strategy." Also, his study neither defined nor differentiated from each other, including image construction, image building, and brand developing (Cai 2002). Other studies (Crockettt & Wood 1999;Westwood et al. 2001; Williams & Palmer) made references to some key aspects of branding concept, but also in general marketing terms and without direct application in destination marketing. And, these studies failed to define destination branding and lack a theoretical framework.

At the empirical level, destination branding is a relatively new concept and academic investigation is just beginning to emerge. However, studies on destination image are plentiful. Therefore, significant progress has been made in advancing the understanding of image measurement (Chen & Uysal 2002; Driscoll, Lawson, & Niven 1994; Echtner & Ritchie 1993; Gartner 1989; Goodrich 1978), its role in tourist's decision making process (Baloglu 1999; Crompton 1978; Fakeye & Crompton 1991; Goodall 1991; Milman & Pizam 1995; Moutinho 1987; Woodside & Sherrell 1977), its components and formation (Baloglu & McCleary 1999a; Baloglu & McCleary 1999b; Beerli & Martin 2004a; Dann 1996; Gartner 1993; Gunn 2001; Phelps 1986; Um & Crompton 1990), and its relationship with tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty (Andreu, Bigne, & Cooper 2000; Beerli & Martin 2004b; Bigne, Sanchez, & Sanchez 2001; Bonn, Joseph, & Dai 2005; Chon 1990; Hu & Ritchie 1993; Oppermann 2000; Ryan 1994, 1995).

Moreover, many researchers in both marketing and hospitality and tourism have studied the relationships among perceived quality, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty (Baker & Crompton 2000; Fornell et al. 1996; Oliver 1999; Oh 1999, 2000; Cronin et al. 2000; Gallarza & Saura 2005; McDougall & Levesque 2000, Petrick 2004;

Petrick et al. 2001; Petrick and Backmann 2002). Most of these studies propose that perceived quality, satisfaction, and loyalty are distinct constructs, and there is a causal relationship among the three constructs, and that perception of quality affects feelings of satisfaction which, in turn, influences a customer's future purchase behavior.

Finally, as already mentioned, previous studies have empirically tested either the relationships among destination image, tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty, or the relationships among perceived quality, tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty respectively. However, they have not provided an integrated approach to understand the relationship between destination branding and tourist behavior, and attempt to extend the theoretical and empirical framework of the structural relationships among these following constructs: destination image, perceived quality, destination awareness, tourist satisfaction, and tourist loyalty, especially in the leisure tourism market. Thus, this study develops and empirically tests a destination brand model and its relevant components from the perspectives of tourists, so that it will help destination marketers to build more competitive tourism destinations.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study is to develop an integrated theoretical model of destination branding, expressed in testable hypotheses, to discover the interplay of relationships among the five constructs of this study, including destination image, perceived quality, destination awareness, tourist satisfaction, and tourist loyalty in leisure tourism market. Also, the study addresses the differences in the relationship amongs the five constructs by trip types.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Because the increasing experience of tourists and growing competition among destinations have lead destination marketers to think about their strategies to achieve competitive advantage (King 2002), tourism destinations have a need to create a unique identity to differentiate themselves from competitors (Morgan & Pritchard 2003; Morgan, Pritchard, & Piggott 2002). Thus, destination branding is a powerful informational signal and marketing weapon available to contemporary destination marketers confronted by increasing competition (Morgan and Pritchard, 2002). However, previous studies have not provided a conceptual and empirically testable destination branding model which is related to tourist behavior. Therefore, this research asks some general questions: “how can destination branding be defined?”, “What kinds of benefits can destination marketers receive through destination branding?”, “How can destination branding influence tourist behavior?”, and “what is the difference in the relationship between destination branding and tourist satisfaction in terms of trip type?”. Based on these general questions about destination branding, this study provides three research questions.

Research question 1 examines if tourist loyalty is influenced by destination branding: destination image, perceived quality, and destination awareness.

Research question 2 examines if there is a relationship between tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty.

Research question 3 examines if the existing nature of the relationship between destination branding and tourist satisfaction is moderated by trip types.

1.6 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Based on the research questions, ten hypotheses are proposed and a structural model is used to determine how tourist satisfaction can be influenced by three constructs of destination brand, including destination image, perceived quality, and destination awareness; how tourists satisfaction can influence tourist loyalty, and whether there is any difference of the relationship between destination branding and tourist satisfaction, in terms of trip types. Therefore, the ten research hypotheses are listed. Some hypotheses (H1, H3, H4, and H7) are confirmatory. These hypotheses are needed to test the proposed theoretical model. The other hypotheses are contributing hypotheses.

H1: Destination image as part of destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty.

H2: Destination image as part of destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction.

H3: Perceived quality as part of destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty.

H4: Perceived quality as part of destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction.

H5: Destination awareness as part of destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty.

H6: Destination awareness as part of destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction.

H7: Tourist satisfaction has a positive influence on tourist loyalty.

H8: The relationship between destination image as part of destination branding and tourist satisfaction is moderated by trip types.

H9: The relationship between perceived quality as part of destination branding and tourist satisfaction is moderated by trip types.

H10: The relationship between destination awareness as part of destination branding and tourist satisfaction is moderated by trip types.

1.7 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Because this study focuses on identifying the relationship between destination branding and tourist behavior, it is grounded in relationship marketing theory, brand equity theory, and signaling theory. According to Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995), several areas of marketing have been the focus of relationship marketing including inter-organizational issues in the context of a buyer-seller partnership (Dwyer, Schurr, & Oh 1987; Johanson, Hallen, & Seyed-Mohamed 1991), network structures and arrangements (Anderson, Hakansson, & Johanson 1994), channel relationships (Boyle, Dwyer, Robicheaux, & Simpson 1992; Ganesan 1994), sales management (Swan & Nolan 1985), and service marketing (Berry 1983; Crosby & Stephens 1987; Crosby, Evans, & Cowles 1990). Today most of the relationship marketing research is being done in service marketing, because long-term relationships between company and customer are most expensive to create and most profitable to nurture in the service sector (Gummesson 1987). Therefore, these studies have focused on creating brand and customer loyalty. Christopher, Payne, and Ballantyne (1991) described relationship marketing as the "combination of marketing, customer service and quality management." Lamb, Hair, and McDaniel (1994) regarded relationship marketing as "the development of strong loyalty whereby customers buy more from the firm."

Many studies have investigated the critical importance of understanding consumers and brands' relationships in the advancement of marketing theory (Clark, Helgeson, Mickelson, & Pataki 1994; Fournier 1998; Mick & Buhl 1992; Miller 1995; Shocker, Srivastava, & Ruekert 1994; Ramsay 1996; Thompson 1996). According to Erdem (1993), brands are symbols that consumers have learned to trust over time, and they often signal intangible product qualities. These signals are often based on experience attributes such as the perceived reliability, quality, and safety (Nelson 1970) that products and related marketing programs afford. Such intangibles lead to more advantages for the company. Thus, consumer's satisfaction with and relationship to a brand provide protection from competition and create customer loyalty. Consequently, consumer-brand relationships explain that satisfied customers often have many desirable characteristics-they buy more, are willing to pay more, incur lower sales and service costs, and provide referrals. This has spurred companies to focus on customer satisfaction and loyalty as a measure of operational success (Shocker et al. 1994).

Hospitality and tourism have introduced many studies of relationship marketing. Airline frequent flyer programs (Gilbert 1996; Gilbert & Karbeyekian 1995; Liu, Wall, & Westlake 2000) and hotel frequent guest programs (Danaher & Mattsson 1994; Palmer, Beattie, & Beggs 2000) have all contributed to tourism being at the forefront of relationship marketing (Palmer & Mayer 1996). Furthermore, destination studies have been interested in the concept of loyalty, which is the most important concept of relationship marketing. For example, a large number of studies have explored the issue of repeat visitation (Bowen & Shoemaker 1998; Gitelson & Crompton 1984; Gyte & Phelps 1989; Pyo, Song, & Chang 1998; Reid & Reid 1993; Ryan 1995) and identified preliminary tourist loyalty typologies (Court & Lupton 1997; Oppermann 1997, 1999, 2000). Also, these studies state that destinations need to extend marketing to the entire destinations, to deliver value to tourists that motivate them to stay in the relationship (Fournier, Dobson, & Mick 1998), and to develop long-term relationship where supplier (destination) and customer (tourist) can work as "partners" (Gronroos 1994).

Aaker (1991) introduced the concept of brand equity, and his framework model for managing brand equity has already established him as a pioneer in the field. Also, he defined "brand" as well as "brand equity." He defined brand equity as "a set of brand assets or liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm's customers" (Aaker 1991, p 15). Aaker further identified five categories of assets and liabilities on which brand equity is based. These included brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand association, and other propriety brand assets.

Keller (1993) presented a conceptual model of brand equity (customer-based brand equity) because brand equity was conceptualized from the perspective of the individual consumer. A conceptual framework was provided for what consumers know about brands and what such knowledge implies for marketing strategies. He defined customer-based brand equity as "the differential effects of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand." From the perspective of Keller's customer-based brand equity framework, brand knowledge is the key to creating brand equity. That is, brand knowledge in consumers' minds is central to the creation and management of brand equity. Brand knowledge can be characterized in terms of two components, including brand awareness and brand image. Brand equity is then a function of level, or depth and breath, of brand awareness and the strength, favorability, and uniqueness of brand association (brand image).

Based on studies by Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993), several researchers have attempted to contribute to the process of adapting and integrating the concepts of brand equity from the mainstream marketing literature into the tourism marketing literature, and more specifically, into the literature directly addressing the concerns of destination management (Ritchie & Ritchie 1998; Cai 2002; Blain, Levy, & Ritchie 2005).

Spence (1974) defined signals as manipulatable attributes or activities that conveyed information about the characteristics of economic agents. Also, Rao, Qu, and Ruekert (1999) regarded a signal as an action that firms could take to convey information credibly about unobservable product quality to the consumers. A stream of research has examined a large variety of market signals: education signals in job markets (Spence 1974); and quality signals such as price (Stiglitz 1989), advertising (Nelson 1970, 1974, 1978), or both (Kihlstrom & Riordan 1984; Milgrom & Roberts 1986). In marketing, signaling theory has been adopted to study a firm's signaling to consumers as well as firm-to-firm signaling. Most of the studies involving firms' signaling to consumers have examined marketing mix elements such as advertising (Kirmani 1990), warranties

(Boulding & Krimani 1993), and brand (Chu & Chu 1994; Dawar & Parker 1994; Erdem and Swait 1998) as quality signal.

Erdem and Swait (1998) offered and empirically tested a conceptualization of brand equity that had its underpinnings in information economics in general (Stigler 1961) and in signaling theory in particular (Stiglitz 1987). Their signaling framework proposed that brand loyalty emerged as a consequence of brand equity because increased expected utility motivated consumers to buy the same subset of brands repeatedly. More specifically, if consumers have a satisfactory usage experience with a product, they obtain positive purchase feedback (loyalty).

1.8 PROPOSED MODEL OF THE STUDY

Figure 1-1 represents the proposed theoretical model which expresses the relationship between destination branding and tourist behavior. The conceptual and structural model is drawn from empirical studies, conceptual research, and theories. The proposed model of this study describes a logical flow among the constructs by indicating the directions of the causes and effects of the interplay of destination branding constructs relating to tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty.

The destination branding constructs in the structural model include destination image, perceived quality, and destination awareness. Primarily, tourist loyalty is affected both directly and indirectly by the interaction of these three constructs. Additionally, the indirect of these constructs on tourist loyalty is contingent on tourist satisfaction.

Consequently, the total effects of tourist loyalty can be the result of direct as well as indirect effects. Therefore, the structural relationships among the five proposed constructs are investigated as a major objective of this study.

1.9 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

The potential contribution of this study can be discussed from both theoretical and practical perspectives. This study contributes to a theoretical development in the field of tourism by combing relationship marketing theory, brand equity theory, and signaling theory, and proposing a model to explain the structural relationships among destination branding and tourist behavior in the leisure tourism market. It adds to previous knowledge by developing a model that explains how destination branding influences tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty. Since a few studies have focused on destination branding from the tourist perspective, this study can provide new insights into the relationships among destination branding and tourist behavior. That is, the most important theoretical contribution of this study is to initiate the development of theoretical foundations to the relationships among destination branding and tourist behavior.

On the other hand, the findings of this study explain how destination branding impacts tourist behavior Thus, they will practically help destination managers and marketers build the competitive strategies of destination branding in order to ensure long-term relationships between tourists and their destinations, and develop relationship

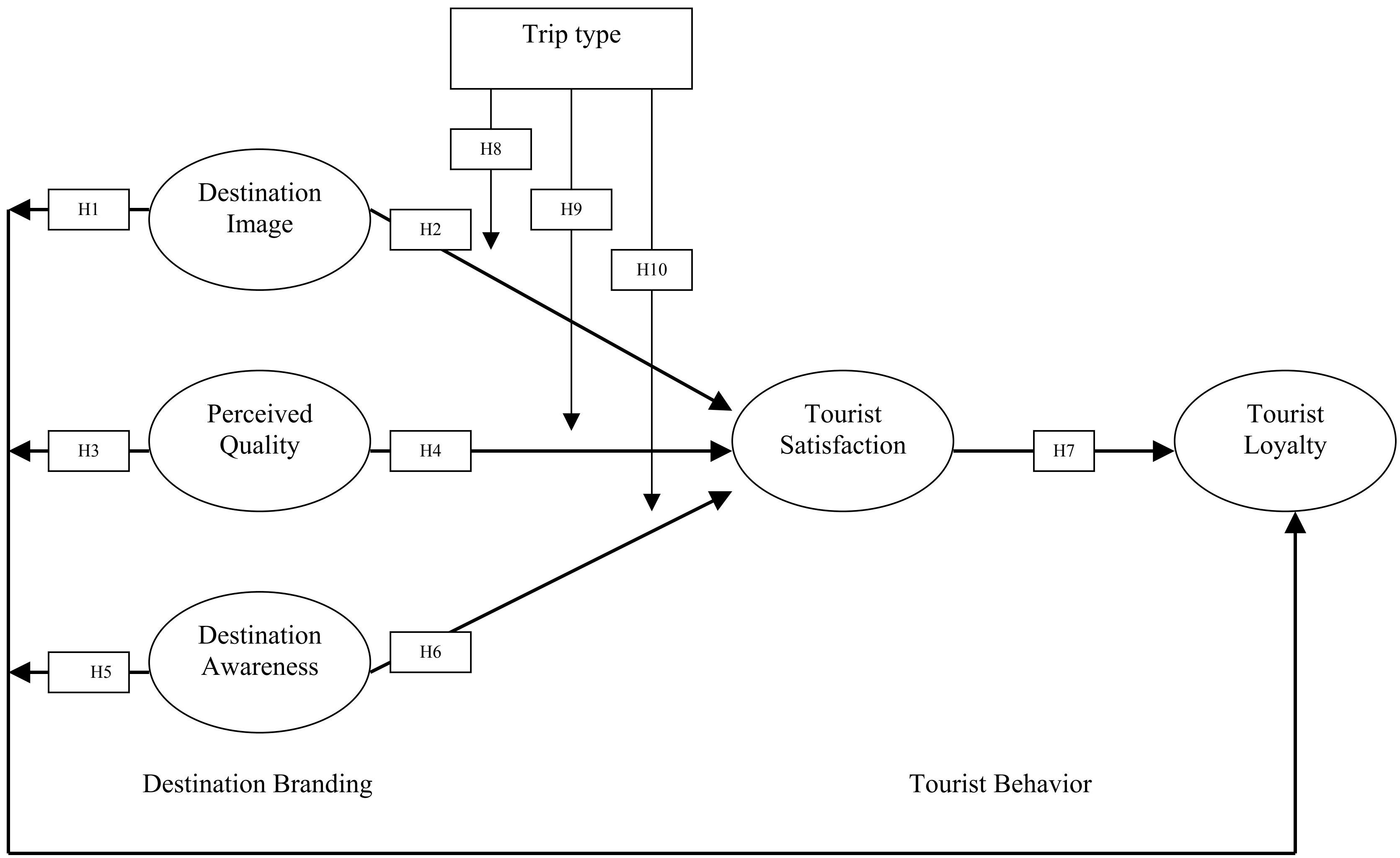


Figure 1-1 Proposed Model of the Study

management techniques and practices in order to build tourist loyalty within the context of destination branding.

1.10 DEFINITONS OF KEY TERMS

Destination branding: Selecting a consistent element mix to identify, differentiate, and distinguish a destination from others through positive image building (Cai 2002).

- **Destination image**: An attitudinal construct consisting of an individual's mental representation of knowledge, feelings, and global impression about an object or destination (Baloglu & McCleary 1999). Perceptions about the destination as reflected by the associations held in tourist memory. A destination image is not a brand but a source of its equity, and a very important one when it comes to destination branding (Cai 2002).
- **Perceived quality**: The consumer's perception of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service with respect to its intended purpose, relative to alternatives (Aaker 1991).
- **Destination awareness**: A rudimentary level of destination knowledge involving at the least, recognition of the destination. It represents the lowest end of a continuum of destination knowledge that ranges from simple recognition of the destination to a highly developed cognitive structure based on detailed information. Familiarity, expertise, and previous experience are three components of destination awareness (Cho 2001).

Satisfaction: An evaluation of an emotion (Hunt 1977), suggesting that it reflects the degree to which a customer believes that the possession and/or use of a service evokes positive feelings (Rust & Oliver 1994). Most of the studies evaluating consumer satisfaction have utilized models of expectancy-disconfirmation, equity, norm, and perceived overall performance.

Loyalty: A repeat purchase behavior and/or the expression of a favorable attitude toward such behavior (Jacoby & Chestnut 1978). A deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same-set purchasing (Oliver 1997).

Trip types (1995 U. S. Pleasure Travel Market in Canada Survey)

- **Outdoors trip**: A natural area where you may engage in activities such as camping, hiking, rafting, fishing, etc.
- **Resort trip**: A resort area where has a variety of activities, such as beaches, skiing, tennis, golfing, etc.
- **City trip**: A city where you may shop, enjoy entertainment, visit museums and theaters, and/or just enjoy the city
- **Cultural/Heritage trip**: A trip taken mainly for the purpose of visiting a historical site or cultural attraction
- **Theme park trip**: A trip taken primarily for the purpose of visiting a major theme park

1.11 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter I represented the overview of the study and included the background of the study, statement of problem, the objectives of the study, the research questions, the research hypotheses, the theoretical background, and the theoretical model that is basis of the study. Chapter II reviews the literature relevant to relationship marketing, the consumer-brand relationship, destination relationship marketing, signaling theory, and brand equity, which comprise theoretical background of this study. Also, it reviews the literature relating the five proposed constructs, such as destination image, perceived quality, destination awareness, tourist satisfaction, and tourist loyalty. Additionally, the hypotheses to be tested are presented. Chapter III provides the research framework, a specific discussion of the research design, the development of the survey instrument, sampling, and procedures of data analysis. Chapter IV reports the results of the pretest and the results of the empirical analyses of the proposed theoretical model that was tested for the hypotheses. Chapter V includes the summary and discussion of the hypotheses testing, discusses the managerial implication and theoretical implications of the findings and the limitations of the study, and concludes with suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the literature relevant to the study of the relationship between destination branding (destination image, perceived quality, and destination awareness) and tourist behavior (satisfaction and loyalty). This chapter also presents the full theoretical model with the hypotheses established by the theoretical framework of this study to be empirically tested.

The first section provides a review of relevant concepts, including relationship marketing, the customer-brand relationship, and destination relationship marketing. The second section mainly focuses on a review of the theories to be employed in this study, such as signaling theory and brand equity theory. The third section examines the literature of the components of destination branding (destination image, perceived quality, and destination awareness). Then, the last section discusses the relevant literature that pertains to tourist behavior (tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty).

2.2 MARKETING PARADIGMS

Marketing, in one form or another is at least as old as civilization, but modern marketing as an applied art and science began in the 1960s and 70s. It originated in consumer markets where relatively low-valued products were sold to mass markets using mass media. Marketing theory held that the first step was to determine customer needs, then next, to produce a product or service that will satisfy these needs. The underlying philosophy was that all the firm's strategic decisions were driven by customer expectations. This core idea has gone through many incarnations in the intervening decades, and gone under various names including: marketing orientation, customer driven, the marketing philosophy, customer intimacy, customer focus, and market driven (Kotler & Armstrong, 1999).

Marketing as a discipline has seen a gradual evolution, refining its key concepts, adding many new concepts, and broadening its scope. For example, there has been a gradual shift from mass marketing to segmented marketing to mass customization. Marketing has also broadened its scope to include industrial markets, electronic markets, and channel management (Kotler 2000; Wright 2004).

Starting in the 1980s, there was a group of theorists that felt this gradual evolution was unsatisfactory. They saw marketing, not as a continuously evolving discipline, but as an established discipline ripe for a paradigm shift (Sheth & Pavatiyar, 2000). They felt that a radical new perspective was required. These theorists are typically associated with either relationship marketing, customer experience management, or network marketing. Relationship marketers, for example, felt that the shift from single transaction marketing to long-term relationship marketing will require a complete revamping of the discipline. Customer experience marketers felt that the relationship marketers started in the right direction but were derailed by their dependence on customer relationship management software, which caused them to lose focus of the individual customer's experience of the service encounter. Network marketers stress the interconnectedness of market actors and can be seen as the application of systems thinking to marketing (Drummmond & Ensor, 2005).

2.3 RELATIONSHIP MARKETING

The contemporary literature appears captivated by the notion of relationship marketing to the extent that a considerable body of opinion now exists, with a diversity of views as to its definition, scope, and worth as a new "paradigm" (Fyall, Callod, & Edwards 2003). Relationship marketing is variously considered to be a tactical "currency" promotional activity, often linked to database technology (Bickert 1992), a strategic tool whereby suppliers seek to "tie-in" customer retention (Gummesson 1999), and a fundamental business philosophy (Pepper & Rogers 1995).

Relationship marketing is an old idea but a new focus now at the front of services marketing practice and academic research. The idea of a business earning the customers' favor and loyalty by satisfying their wants and needs was not unknown to the earliest merchants (Berry, 1995).

The origins of modern relationship marketing can be traced back to a passage by Schneider (1980). He wrote "what is surprising is that 1) researchers and businessmen have concentrated far more on how to attract consumers to products and services than on how to retain those customers; 2) there is almost no published research on the retention of service consumers; and 3) consumer evaluation of products or service has rarely been used as a criterion or index of organizational achievements." (Schneider 1980: P.54) The initial research was done by Gronroos at the Swedish School of Economics (Gronroos 1982) who describes what he called "interactive marketing," by Berry at Texas A&M

(Berry 1980) who coined the term "relationship marketing," and by first generation theorist Levitt at Harvard (Levitt, 1983) who wanted to broaden the scope of marketing beyond individual transactions. Practically, relationship marketing originated in industrial and business-to-business (B-2-B) markets where long-term contracts have been quite common for many years. Scholar like Jackson at Harvard re-examined these industrial marketing practices and applied them to marketing proper (Jackson, 1985).

According to Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995), several areas of marketing have recently been the focus of relationship marketing including inter-organizational issues in the context of a buyer-seller partnership (Dwyer, Schurr, & Oh 1987; Johanson, Hallen, & Seyed-Mohamed 1991); network structures and arrangements (Anderson, Hakansson, & Johanson 1994); channel relationships (Boyle, Dwyer, Robicheaux, & Simpson 1992; Ganesan 1994); sales management (Swan & Nolan 1985); service marketing (Berry 1983; Crosby & Stephens 1987; Crosby, Evans, & Cowles 1990); and business alliances (Buckin & Sengupta 1993; Heide & John 1990).

Today most of the relationship marketing research is being done in service marketing. According to Gummesson (1987), this is because long-term relationships are most expensive to create and most profitable to nurture in the service sector. The phrase "relationship marketing" appeared in the services marketing literature for the first time in a 1983 paper by Berry (Barnes 1994; Gronroos 1994). Berry defined relationship marketing as "attracting, maintaining and-in multi-service organizations-enhancing customer relationships" (P.25). He stressed that the attraction of new customers should be viewed only as an intermediate step in the marketing process. Solidifying the relationship, transforming indifferent customers into loyal ones, and serving customers as clients also should be considered as marketing. Berry outlined five strategy elements for practicing relationship marketing: developing a core service around which to build a customer relationship, customizing the relationship to the individual customer, augmenting the core service with extra benefits, pricing services to encourage customer loyalty, and marketing to employees so that they, in turn, will perform well for customers (Berry 1983).

Some approaches have described relationship marketing as customer retention, locking in the customer, database marketing and mutual exchange programs. Gronroos (1990) stated that relationship marketing "is to establish, maintain, enhance and commercialize customer relationships (often but not necessarily always long term relationships) so that the objectives of the parties involved are met. This is done by a mutual exchange and fulfillment of promises." (P.5) This definition can be seen as an attempt to integrate both the transactional and the relational qualities of marketing. He argued that all marketing strategies lay on a continuum ranging from transactional to relational marketing where relationship marketing could be judged in terms of measures of customer retention rather than market share. For this reason there is a different emphasis for the marketing effort and more focus is placed on communication and loyalty-building strategies (Gilvert 1996). Also, Gronroos (1991, 1994) placed services on the continuum at the extreme point of relationship marketing. He believed that the 4P's of the marketing mix-product, price, place, and promotion (McCarthy, 1968)- were more appropriate for the transactional marketing approach, while he saw the relationship approach requiring additional consideration of the interactive marketing function. The interactive marketing function was defined as marketing activities outside of the marketing mix. A move toward relationship marketing, according to Gronroos, leaded to less price sensitivity, a focus more on functional quality rather than technical quality, and greater interorganizational collaboration (Jones 2000).

Shani and Chalasani (1992) offered a similar definition. They defined relationship marketing as "an integrate effort to identify, maintain, and build up a network with individual consumers and to continuously strengthen the network for the mutual benefit of both sides, though interactive, individualized and value-added contacts over a long period of time (P.44). Christopher, Payne, and Ballantyne (1991) described relationship marketing as the "combination of marketing, customer service and quality management," Lamb, Hair, & McDaniel (1994) regarded relationship marketing as "the development of strong loyalty whereby customers buy more from the firm."

In order to easily understand the definition of relationship marketing, Table 2-1 lists the differences between transaction marketing and relationship marketing.

Table 2-1 Transaction Marketing versus Relationship Marketing

Transaction Marketing	Relationship Marketing
• Short-term orientation on the sale as the end results	• Long-term orientation. The sale is only the beginning
• 'Me' oriented	• 'We' oriented
• Focus on achieving a specific sale	• Focus on retention and repeat sales
• Emphasis on persuasion to buy	• Stress on creating positive relationships
• Need to win, manipulation	• Providing trust and service
• Stress or conflict of achieving a transaction	• Partnership and cooperation to minimize defection and provide longer term relationships (with customers or strategic alliances, joints ventures, vender partnering, etc)
• Anonymous customer won by conquest in a carefully planned event	• Individual profile of customer known so that a continuing process can emerge

2.3.1 Consequences of Relationship Marketing

Sheth and Paratiyar (1995) provided some consequences of relationship marketing in consumer markets. They believed that relationship marketing would lead to greater marketing productivity by making it more effective and efficient. With one-to-one marketing practices and by increasing customer involvement in the organizational functions of design, development, and sales, relationship marketing would be more effective in meeting consumer needs. Similarly, by reducing some of the wasteful marketing practices associated with competitive mass marketing, and by letting the consumer become, in part, producer, relationship marketing will help achieve greater marketing efficiency.

First, relationship marketing practices are likely to become more effective because the individual customer's needs are better addressed and consumer involvement in the development of marketing processes and practices leads to greater commitment of the consumer to the marketer's programs (McKenna 1991; Peppers & Rogers 1993; Sheth & Parvatiyar 1993). That is, the effectiveness of relationship marketing is accomplished by appropriately directing the marketing resources toward those that provide the greatest value to consumers, by improving consumer involvement in the design, development, marketing processes of the company, and by minimizing the side-effects or the negative public image of marketing practices.

Second, Sheth and Paratiyar (1995) explained three important aspects of relationship marketing leading to greater marketing efficiency: 1) Customer retention economics suggested that when marketers direct greater efforts toward retaining customers, it should be less expensive to do business; 2) through cooperative and efficient consumer response, marketers will be able to reduce many unproductive marketing resources that are wasted in the system; and 3) as cooperation develops between the consumer and the marketer, the consumer will be willing to undertake some of the value creation activities currently being performed by the marketer, such as self-service, self-ordering, and co-production.

Relationship marketing is able to benefit the firm. Reichheld and Sasser (1990) demonstrated across a variety of service industries that profits climbed steeply when a company successfully lowered its customer-defection rate. Not only do loyal customers generate more revenue for more years, the costs to maintain existing customers frequently were lower than the costs to acquire new customers.

Relationship marketing benefits the customer as well as the firm. For continuously or periodically delivered services that are personally important, variable in quality, and/or complex, many customers will desire to be relationship customers. High-involvement services also hold relationship appeal to customers. Furthermore, relationship marketing allows service providers to become more knowledgeable about the customer's requirements and needs. Knowledge of the customer combined with social rapport built over series of service encounters facilitate the tailoring or customizing of service to the customer's specifications. It also allows the customers to obtain the risk-reducing benefits of having a relationship with a given provider (Berry 1995).

Because relationship marketing provides some benefits to the customer and the company, recently in consumer marketing the focus has shifted from creating brand and loyalty through advertising and sales promotion programs, toward developing direct one-to-one relationships. These relationship marketing programs include frequent user incentives, customer referral benefits, preferred customer programs, after-marketing support, use of relational databases, mass-customization, and consumer involvement in the company's decisions. In most cases, consumers are also willing to accept such relationships with marketers. There are several sources of evidence for relationship marketing, including, membership of airline and hotel frequent user programs, store membership cards, direct inquiries and registration with customer service hotlines established by the manufacturers (Sheth & Paratiyar 1993, 1995).

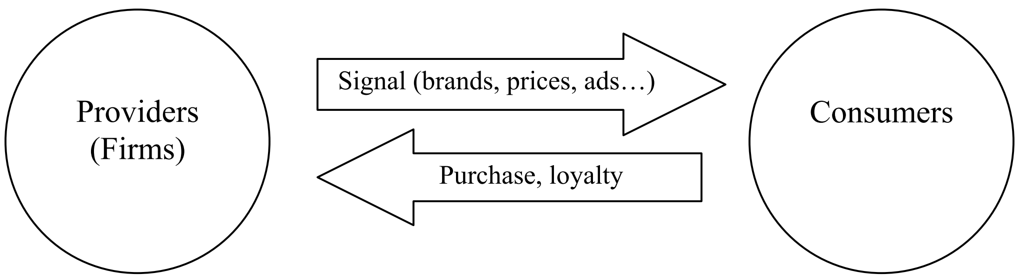


Figure 2-1 Relationship Marketing

2.3.2 Consumers-Brands Relationship

Many studies have investigated the critical importance of understanding consumers and brands' relationships to the advancement of marketing theory (Clark, Helgeson, Mickelson, & Pataki 1994; Fournier 1998; Mick & Buhl 1992; Miller 1995; Shocker, Srivastava, & Ruekert 1994; Ramsay 1996; Thompson 1996). According to Aaker (1991), the value of a brand was associated closely with its awareness, quality perception, and the customer satisfaction engendered by related products and offerings, among others. Brands were symbols that consumers have learned to trust over time, and they often signal intangible product qualities (Erdem 1993). This signal was often based on experience attributes such as the perceived reliability, quality, and safety (Nelson 1970) that products and related marketing programs afforded. Such intangibles lead to more defensible advantages for the firm relative to search attributes (physical features and prices that were readily comparable across brands via inspection or information search). Also, consumer satisfaction and relationship with a brand provided brands with protection from competition and sometimes satisfaction offered protections from the firm's mistakes. Relationships put any single action into perspective, its importance evaluated against the background of previous experiences with the brands. Consequently, firms have found that satisfied customers often had many desirable characteristics-they buy more, were willing to pay more, incur lower sales and service costs, and provided referrals. This has spurred firms to focus on customer satisfaction as a measure of operational success (Shocker et al. 1994).

On the other hand, Fournier (1998) conducted an empirical study to investigate relational phenomena in the consumer products domain, particularly at the level of the brand. In her study, she argued for the validity of the relationship proposition in the consumer-brand context, including a debate as to the legitimacy of the brand as an active relationship partner and empirical support for the phenomenological significance of consumer-brand bonds; and provided a framework for characterizing and better understanding the types of relationships consumers formed with brands. Inducts formed the data the concept of brand relationship quality, a diagnostic tool for conceptualizing and evaluating relationship strength. Eventually, Fournier (1998) suggested an alternative to the construct of brand loyalty in the notion of brand relationship quality. Brand relationship quality was similar in spirit to brand loyalty: both constructs attempted to capture the strength of the connection formed between the consumer and the brand toward a prediction of relationship stability over time.

Therefore, the consumer-brand relationship provides conceptual richness over extant loyalty notions that should prove capable of stimulating theory, research, and practice in valuable and meaningful ways. Figure 2-2 illustrates the relationship between consumers and brands.

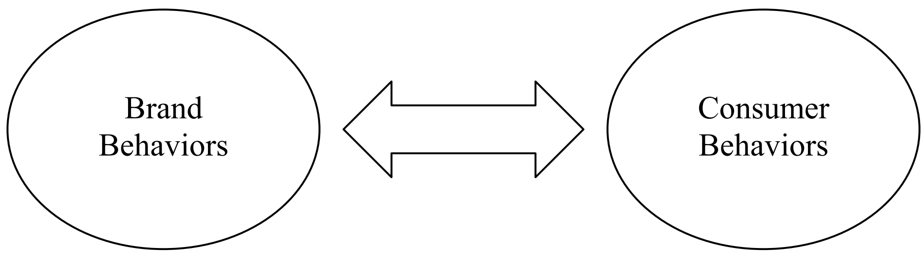


Figure 2-2 Consumer-Brand Relationships

2.3.3 Destination Relationship Marketing

With the long history of relational exchange, tourism has witnessed the introduction of many relationship marketing practices. Airline frequent flyer programs (Gilbert 1996; Gilbert & Karbeyekian 1995; Liu, Wall, & Westlake 2000), hotel frequent guest programs (Danaher & Mattsson 1994; Palmer, Beattie, & Beggs 2000), and car rental company customer preference schemes (Chadee & Mattsson 1996) have all contributed to tourism being at the forefront of industries adopting relationship marketing (Palmer & Mayer 1996).

Although the relevance of the concept of loyalty has reached a state of maturity in the wider marketing literature (Sheth & Parvatiyar 2000), it has received scant attention in the destination literature (Oppermann 2000). While a small number of studies have explored the issue of repeat visitation (Bowen & Shoemaker 1998; Gitelson & Crompton 1984; Gyte & Phelps 1989; Pyo, Song, & Chang 1998; Reid & Reid 1993) and identified preliminary tourist loyalty typologies (Court & Lupton 1997; Oppermann 1997, 1999), there remains a vacuum of research to support universal adoption of relationship marketing strategies in the destination context. To redress this situation, a number of questions need to be answered and choices made. Therefore, Payne et al. (1996) stated that destinations should decide whether or not to pursue a relationship with tourists. Also, destinations need to extend marketing to the entire destinations, to deliver value to tourists that motivate them to stay in the relationship (Fournier, Dobson, & Mick 1998), and to develop long-term relationships where suppliers (destinations) and customers (tourists) can work as “partners” (Gronroos 1994).

Furthermore, Fyall et al. (2003) explored the opportunities and challenges faced by managers of destinations in their attempt to engender loyalty and repeat visitation in a product domain traditionally considered highly complex, fragmented, and difficult to manage. They concluded that, first, tourists might have no desire to engage in a long-term relationship for a product of infrequent or one time only purchase. Second, the need for an ongoing relationship was dependent upon the level of buyer confidence, where closeness is generally perceived to require the building of trust and the reduction of risk, and third, destinations that wished to pursue long-term cooperation with their tourists must be able to provide value.

2.4 SIGNALING THEORY

A stream of research has examined a large variety of market signals: education signals in job markets (Spence 1974); and quality signals such as price (Stiglitz 1989), advertising (Nelson 1970, 1974, 1978), and advertising and price (Kihlstrom & Riordan 1984; Milgrom & Roberts 1986). In marketing, signaling theory has been adopted to study firm's signaling to consumers as well as firm-to-firm signaling. Most of the studies involving firms' signaling to consumers have examined marketing mix elements such as advertising (Kirmani 1990), warranties (Boulding & Krimani 1993), or retailer choice (Davis 1991) as quality signal. Also, consumer researchers have studied the impact of brand on quality perception (Chu & Chu 1994; Dawar & Parker 1994).

Product quality is not readily observable to buyers prior to purchase, but is revealed fully after purchase (Nelson 1974; Wright & Lynch 1995). Furthermore, the level of quality is generally not opaque to the seller, and this differential level of information between sellers and consumers creates the well-known problem of information asymmetry (Akerlof 1970; Kreps 1991). In other words, firms know better than consumers the quality of the products they sell (asymmetric information) and consumers cannot readily evaluate the product quality of experience or credibility of products (imperfect information). Therefore, a need arises for market mechanisms by which firms can credibly inform consumers about the quality of their products (Erdem & Swait 1998).

Spence (1974) defined signals as manipulatable attributes or activities that conveyed information about the characteristics of economic agents. Also, Rao, Qu, and Ruekert (1999) regarded a signal as an action that firms could take to convey information credibly about unobservable product quality to the consumers. According to Tirole

(1990), signaling theory suggested that signal credibility determined whether a market signal conveyed information effectively.

Because marketing mix elements such as packaging, advertising, price, warranties, and brand not only provide direct product information but also convey indirect information on product attributes about which consumers were imperfectly informed, they might serve effectively as signals.

For example, Nelson has argued in a series of papers (1970, 1974, 1978) that that sort of advertising could still be informative, but indirectly so, if there existed market mechanisms that produced a positive relationship between product quality and perceived advertising expenditures. In this case, consumers could correctly infer unobservable quality from observable advertising; that is, advertising signaled quality. And, some researchers (Kihlstrom & Riordan 1984; Milgrom & Roberts 1986) argued that advertising might serve as a quality signal if consumers perceived high advertising costs as demonstrating a firm's commitment to its brand. The reasoning would be that fly-by-night producers were much less likely to be able to afford expensive endorsers and spent a lot of money on advertising. Indeed, Kirmani (1990) found that consumers used perceived advertising expenditures of firms as cues to infer quality when product quality information was missing.

Similarly, a high price may function as a quality signal by guiding inferences about demand- or supply-related quality information. More specifically, a high price may reflect either a high demand for superior quality or the high production costs associated with high quality (Spence 1974; Tirole 1990). Moreover, Milgrom and Roberts (1986) offered a model based on the repeat sales mechanism in which both price and advertising were decision variables that might potentially be used as signals of quality. They showed that in equilibrium both might simultaneously be used as signals, with the chosen levels of both prices and advertising differing between high- and low- quality firms. This means that customers could in fact infer product quality from observing either price or advertising volume.

Warranties also may signal a firm's confidence in the quality of its products if consumers expect lower quality producers not to have longer, more comprehensive warranties (Boulding & Kirmani 1993; Cooper & Ross 1985; Grossman 1981; Lutz 1989). And, firms of high quality products can afford to offer good warranties because the likelihood that they will have to honor those warranties is relatively low.

According to the information economics literature on brands, under information asymmetry, brands also can serve as a signal of unobservable quality (Rao, Qu, & Ruekert 1999). According to Erdem and Swait (1998), a brand signal was composed of a firm's past and present marketing mix strategies and activities associated with the brand. In other words, a brand becomes a signal because it embodies (or symbolizes) a firm's past and present marketing strategies. Thus, with asymmetric and imperfect information, brands may serve as credible market signals. For example, branded products are likely to be of higher quality than unbranded products (Rao, Qu, & Ruekert 1999), and brands therefore can function as effective signals of unobservable quality. Consumers who believe this logic will accept the branded product's quality claim as true (Rao, Qu, & Ruekert 1999). Thus, brands as market signals improve consumer perceptions about brand attribute levels and increase confidence in brands' claims.

Erdem and Swait (1998) offered and empirically tested a conceptualization of brand equity that had its underpinnings in information economics in general (Stigler 1961) and in signaling theory in particular (Stiglitz 1987). Their signaling framework proposed that brand loyalty emerged as a consequence of brand equity because increased expected utility (due to decreased information costs and perceived risk) motivated consumers to buy the same subset of brands repeatedly (given a match between tastes and product offerings). More specifically, if consumers had a satisfactory usage experience with a product, they obtained positive purchase feedback. If the usage experience was consistent with the firm's product claims, the credibility of the brand signal increased. This raises consumer utility by lowering perceived risk and information costs and enhances the value of the brand signal. As a consequence, the likelihood of repeat purchase increases, leading to the formation of brand loyalty; in other words, consumers may buy a brand due to the additional expected utility (value) created by a brand signal. Then, given usage satisfaction, consumers may continue to buy that particular brand due to low perceived risks and information costs associated with the brand. Brand loyalty stems in part from lower perceived risks and information costs associated with credible and familiar brands. Therefore, given that consumer tastes and product offerings match closely, brand loyalty may be a consequence of brand equity.

2.5 BRAND AND BRAND EQUITY

Tourism destinations, just like other consumer products, have had to turn to branding to identify and distinguish themselves and to convey a positive and motivating message (Aaker 1991, 1996; Murphy 1987, 1990). Brand recognition and differentiation are pivotal because other bases of competition (such as product attributes) are relatively easy to match or exceed among tourism destinations (D'Hauteserre 2001). Branding also adds meanings to the consumer product (McCracken 1988). Branding associations (the attitude, the information, the reason to buy, implanted in the mind of consumers) help differentiate travel destinations (Aaker 1991).

Several researchers have attempted to contribute to the process of adapting and integrating branding concepts from the mainstream marketing literature into the tourism management literature, and more specifically, into the literature directly addressing the concerns of destination management (Ekinci, Hosany, & Uysal 2005; Ritchie & Ritchie 1998; Blain, Levy, & Ritchie 2005). However, although the level of research regarding the destination branding is substantial and growing, the research does not appear to be supported by the same level of conceptual and measurement rigour that has characterized the generic field of branding (Aaker & Keller 1990; Aaker 1991, 1996, 1997; Aaker & Biel 1993; Ambler 1997; Biel 1997; Berry 2000; Broniarczyk & Alba 1994; Carpenter, Glazer, & Nakamoto 1994; Dacin & Smith 1994; Feldwick 1996; Fournier 1998; Hankinson 2004; Kapferer 1998; Park & Jaworski 1986; Park & Srinivasan 1994; Raj 1985; Shocker, Srivastava, & Ruekert 1994; Upshaw 1995). Therefore, this section mentions the marketing literature that provides a basic understanding of the fundamentals of brand theory and brand management, before examining the literature that illustrates the applicability and utility of branding for a tourism destination standpoint. Also, it provides the underlying theory of branding and the holistic definitions of branding in order to derive a definition for destination branding.

Traditional roots of branding can be traced back to the late 19th century with the development of branded consumer products. Branding is a powerful weapon in the marketing arsenal of contemporary marketers confronted by increasing competition, product parity and substitutability (Morgan, Pritchard, & Piggott 2003). Thus, researchers have recently considered branding a “hot topic,” with many contemporary books discussing the concept of branding (Aaker 1991, 1996; Aker & Joachimsthaler 2000; Carpenter, Glazer, & Nakamoto 1994; Kania 2001; Keller 1998; Kapferer 1998; Upshaw 1995).

Branding has been around for centuries as a means to distinguish the goods of one producer from those of another. In fact, the word “brand” is derived form the Old Norse word “brandr,” which means “to burn,” as brands were and still are the means by which owners of livestock mark their animals to identify them (Interbrand Group 1992; Keller 1998). According to the American Marketing Association (1992), a brand can be defined as “a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or combination of them which is intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors” (p.442). Thus, the key to creating a brand, according to this definition, is to choose a name, logo, symbol, package design, or other attribute that identifies a product and distinguishes it from others. These individual brand components are called “brand identities” and their totally “the brand.” (Keller 1993). Therefore, a brand signals to the consumer the source of the product, and protects both the consumer and producer from competitors who would attempt to provide products that appear to be identical.

Aaker (1991) introduced the concept of brand equity and his framework model for managing brand equity has already established him as a pioneer in the field (Figure 2-3). And, he regarded brand equity as “a set of brand assets or liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm’s customers” (Aaker 1991, p 15). Aaker further identified five categories of assets and liabilities on which brand equity is based. These included brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand association, and other propriety brand assets.

- Brand loyalty: a measure of the attachment that a consumer has to a brand. The brand loyalty of the consumer base is often the core of a brand’s equity.
- Brand awareness: the ability of a potential buyer to recognize or recall that a brand is a member of a certain product category.
- Perceived quality: the consumer’s perception of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service with respect to its intended purpose, relative to alternatives.
- Brand association: anything “linked” in memory to a brand. Brand image is a set of associations, usually organized in some meaningful way. Both association and image represent perceptions which may or may not reflect objective reality.
- Other propriety brand assets: patents, trademarks, channel relationships, etc.

Subsequently, Aaker (1997) investigated each of the foregoing assets/liabilities, and their relation to brand equity in considerable detail. The key aspects of the examination included: 1) the value of brand loyalty and how to create and maintain brand loyalty, 2) the nature and value of brand awareness, 3) the nature and dimensions of perceived quality, 4) the nature of brand associations, image, and positioning, and the value of these factors, 5) the characteristics and roles of effective names, symbols, and slogans, 6) the characteristics of successful brand extensions, and 7) strategies for brand revitalization (Ritchie & Ritchie 1998)

Keller (1993) presented a conceptual model of brand equity (customer-based brand equity) in which brand equity was conceptualized from the perspective of the individual consumer and a conceptual framework was provided of what consumers know about brands and what such knowledge implies for marketing strategies. He defined customer-based brand equity as “the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand.” That is, customer-based brand equity involved consumers’ reactions to an element of the marketing mix for the brand in comparison with their reactions to the same marketing mix element attributed to a fictitiously named or unnamed version of the product or service. Customer-based brand equity occurred when the consumer was familiar with the brand and held some favorable, strong, and unique brand associations in memory.

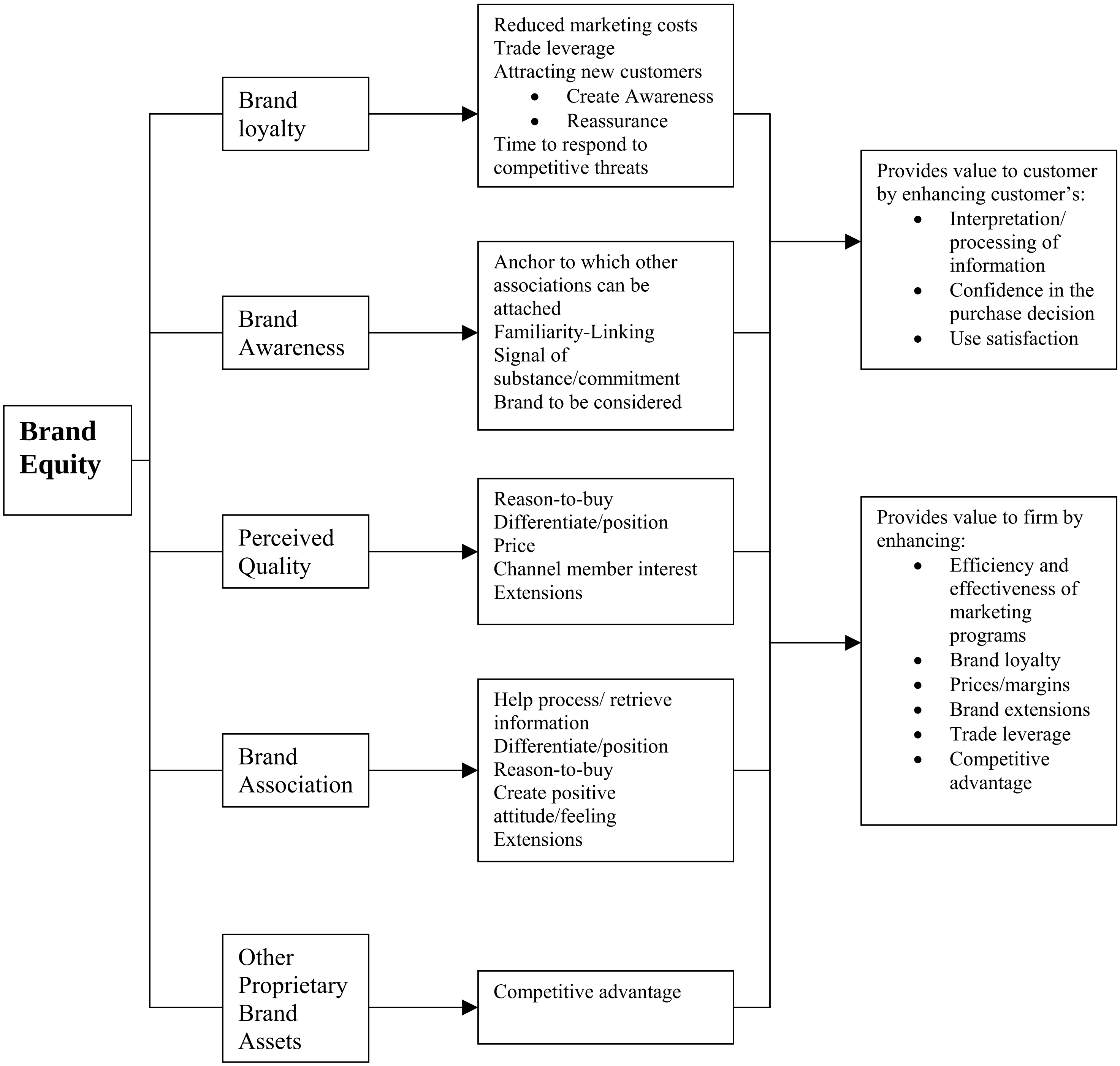


Figure 2-3 Framework For Brand Equity Management

From the perspective of Keller's customer-based brand equity framework, brand knowledge is the key to creating brand equity. That is, brand knowledge in consumers' minds is central to the creation and management of brand equity. Brand knowledge can be characterized in terms of two components, including brand awareness and brand image. Brand equity is then a function of level, or depth and breath, of brand awareness and the strength, favorability, and uniqueness of brand association (brand image).

- Brand awareness: the strength of brand node or trace in memory, as reflected by consumers' ability to identify the brand under different condition. It consists of brand recognition and brand recall performance.
    - Brand recognition: consumers' ability to confirm prior exposure to the brand when given the brand as a cue.
    - Brand recall: consumers' ability to retrieve the brand when given the product category, the needs fulfilled by the category, or some other type of probe as a cue.
- Brand image: perception about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory. It consists of types, favorability, strength, and uniqueness of brand association.

Keller's research (1993) also provided two basic approaches to measure customer-based brand equity. First, the indirect approach measured brand knowledge to assess the potential sources of brand equity. Second, the direct approach measured the effects of the brand knowledge on consumer response to elements of the marketing mix. In conclusion, Keller explored some specific aspects of the conceptualization by considering how customer-based brand equity was built, measured, and managed.

Furthermore, Keller (2003) accounted for and understood the multidimensional nature of consumer brand knowledge (in terms of different types of information in consumer memory) and leveraging (in terms of multiple sources of secondary meaning from a liked entity) to provide the right perspective and backdrop to consumer research into branding. Therefore, he provided the dimensions of brand knowledge. These dimensions include:

- Awareness: category identification and needs satisfied by the brand.
- Attributes: descriptive features that characterize the brand name product either intrinsically (ex. related to product performance) or extrinsically (ex. related to brand personality or heritage).
- Benefits: personal value and meaning that consumers attach to the brand's product attributes (ex. functional, symbolic, or experiential consequences from the brand's purchase or consumption).
- Images: visual information, either concrete or abstract in nature.
- Thoughts: personal cognitive responses to any brand-related information.
- Feelings: personal affective responses to any brand-related information.
- Attitudes: summary judgments and overall evaluations to any brand-related information.
- Experiences: purchase and consumption behaviors and any other brand-related episodes.

Upshaw (1995) not only defined a vocabulary to describe various aspects of a brand's makeup, but also particularly distinguished brand valuation and brand identity.

- Brand equity: the total accumulated value or worth of a brand; the tangible and intangible assets that the brand contributes to its corporate parent, both financially and in terms of selling leverage.
- Brand valuation: the factors that have a direct bearing on the worth of a brand, including its financial assets and intangible goodwill.
- Brand identity: part of the brand's overall equity; the total perception of a brand in the marketplace, driven mostly by its positioning and personality.
- Brand positioning: what a brand stands for in the minds of customers and prospects, relative to its competition, in terms of benefits and promises.
- Brand personality: the outward face of a brand; its tonal characteristics most closely associated with human traits.
- Brand essence: the core of distillation of the brand identity.
- Brand character: having to do with the internal constitution of the brand, how it is seen in terms of its integrity, honesty, and trustworthiness.
- Brand soul: related to the brand character, defined as the values and emotional core of the brand.
- Brand culture: the system of values that surround a brand, much like the cultural aspects of a people or a country.
- Brand image: generally synonymous with either the brand's strategic personality or its reputation as a whole.

Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) provided a very useful supporting theoretical framework for Aaker's (1991) definition. Their theory of brand equity postulated that the value of a brand was delivered from four main factors, including brand awareness, perceived quality of the brand, brand association (brand image), and brand loyalty.

Hankinson (2004) enunciated another conceptual framework that related to branding. His proposed model was built around the concept of brand networks in which branding performed four main functions: 1) brands as communicators, where brands represent a mark of ownership, and a means of product differentiation manifested in legally protected names, logos, and trademarks; 2) brands as perceptual entities, which appeal to the consumer senses, reasons, and emotions; 3) brand as value enhancers, which has led to the concept of brand equity; and 4) brands as relationships, where the brand is construed as having a personality which enables it to form a relationship with consumer (p 110-111). His general model regarded place as relational brand networks in which place brand was represented by a core brand and four categories of brand relationships (consumer relationships, primary service relationships, brand infrastructure relationships, and media relationships) that enhanced the brand reality and the brand experience. Also, it provided and explained numerous additional functions for both buyers and sellers (Berthon, Hulbert, & Pitt 1999; Blain, Levy, & Ritchie 2005). Figure 2-4 illustrates the functions of a brand for the buyer and seller.

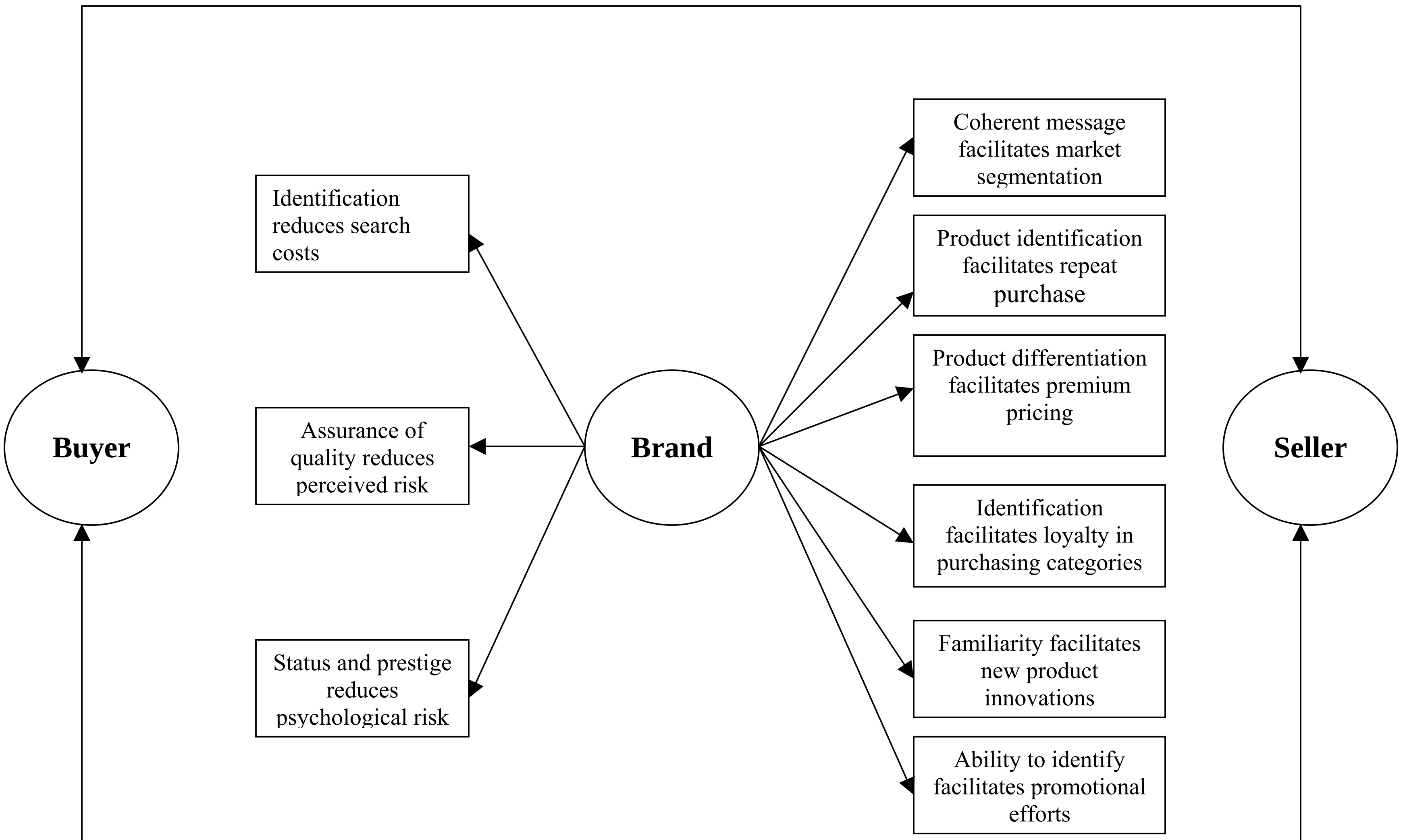


Figure 2-4 Function of a Brand for the buyer and seller

As mentioned in Chapter I, the model of this study is based on relationship marketing theory, brand equity theory, and signaling theory. Relationship marketing includes inter-organizational issues in the context of a buyer-seller partnership, network structures and arrangements, channel relationships, sales management, and service marketing. Today most studies of the relationship marketing focused on creating brand and customer loyalty to build long-term relationships between company and customer. A stream of research about signaling theory has examined a large of market signals such as price, advertising, and brand. Aaker (1991) introduces the concept of brand equity, which consists of brand image, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and other brand assets. Based on the three theories, a common factor (brand) is provided. Figure 2-5 illustrates the interplay of the three theories.

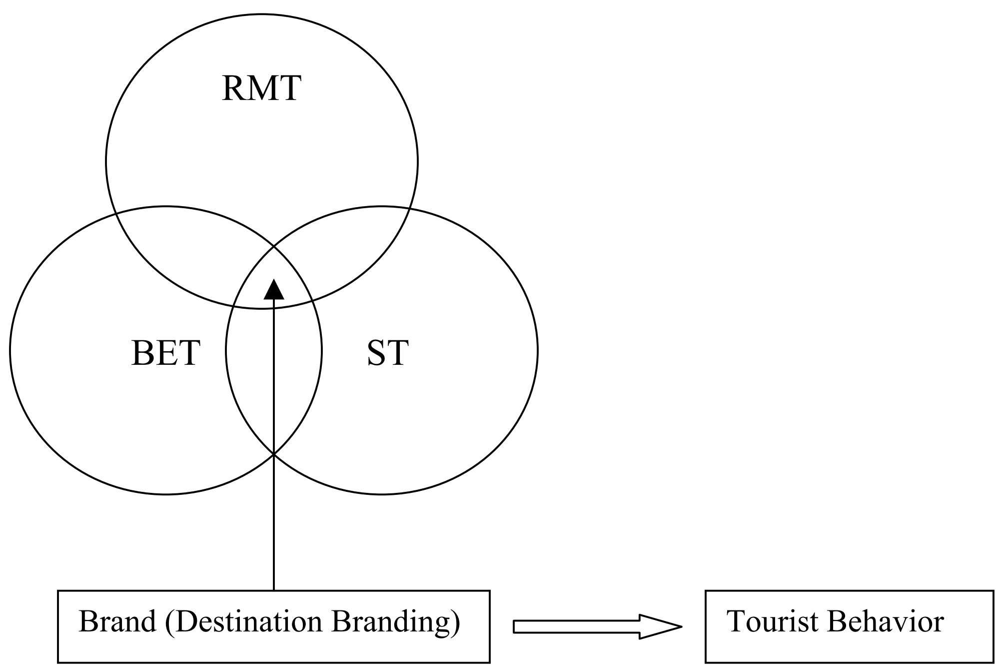


Figure 2-5 Interplay of Three Theories (RMT: Relationship Marketing Theories, BET: Brand Equity Theory, ST: Signaling Theory)

2.6 DESTINATION BRAND

As mentioned before, the previous section (Brand and Brand Equity) provides the underlying theory of branding and the holistic definitions of branding in order to derive a definition for destination branding. Thus, based on Aaker's definition of a brand (1991), Ritchie and Ritchie (1998) defined a destination brand as " a name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that both identified and differentiated the destination; furthermore, it conveyed the promise of a memorable travel experience that was uniquely associated with the destination; it also served to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of the destination experience" (P. 103). Their definition addressed Aaker's (1991) core branding concepts (identification and differentiation).

In 1998, branding within the context of tourism destinations started to gain visibility with destination branding the focal topic at the year's Travel and Tourism Research Association's Annual Conference. Since then, the enhanced awareness of the importance of branding as a strategic marketing activity has given rise to an increasing interest in the potential contribution of branding to business development in sectors outside marketing's traditional homeland of product and service marketing. Therefore, destination brand as a concept is increasingly being applied to countries (Anholt 2002; Brown, Chalip, Jago, & Mules 2004; Gilmore 2001; Hall 2002; Kotler & Gertner 2002; Martinovic 2002; Ooi 2004; Piggott, Morgan, & Pritchard 2004; Pride 2002; Pritchard & Morgan 1998, 2002; Ryan & Simons 1998; Ryan & Zahra 2002), States (Curtis 2000; Fiveash 1998; Lee, Cai, O'Leary 2005; Nickerson & Moisey 1999; Slater 2002), cities (Evans 2003; Gilmore 2004; Hankinson 2001; Reeh 1998; Smith 2004; Vesey & Dimanche 1998), as well as regions (Cai 2002; Crockett & Wood 2002; Orth & Tureckova 2001). Also, this literature of destination branding places destination branding in the wider context, explores destination branding challenges, and comprises the case studies of successful destination branding initiatives.

Anholt (2002) illustrated how successful nation brands provide trust, quality, and lifestyle connotations that consumers could associate with themselves. He not only demonstrated that a nation's image can profoundly shape its economic, cultural and political destiny, but also that changing nation reputations and building brands were difficult, complex and long-term challenges which required honesty, objectivity and above all, an empathetic understanding of the consumers' mindspace. Thus, he suggested that nation brand markets should be able effectively to utilize and capitalize on consumers' perception of destination.

Kotler and Gertner (2002) examined how widely held country images affect consumer attitudes towards a country's products and services, profoundly influencing abilities to attract investment, business, and tourists. In particular, they discussed image management, the attraction of tourists and inward investment, and the manipulation of new market opportunities. They outlined a strategic management framework for nation branding. For example, strategic image management included all process of researching a nation's image among its audiences, segmenting and targeting its specific image and its demographic audiences, positioning the nation's benefits to support an existing image or create a new image, and communicating those benefits to the target audiences.

Hall (2002), Morgan and Pritchard (2002), Palmer (2002), and Ryan and Zahra (2002) explained challenges of destination branding. Hall (2002) explored issues of provenance in Central and Eastern Europe where nation branding has been influenced by the need to portray an 'EU-style identity.' The study highlighted how destination marketers in this region faced many of the challenges such as inadequate finance, lack if expertise, short-termism, and a lack of partnership approaches and networks.

Morgan and Pritchard (2002) overviewed the key challenges, each of which had the potential to derail the best branding strategy. As their examples of destinations such as Nepal and Oregon suggest, political pressures and external environmental changes had to be addressed if a destination brand was to prosper and grow. Also, they argued that successful branding brought significant rewards and discussed how strong destination brands could be built around perceived value, and emotional appeal and celebrity, focusing on examples including Australia, Cuba, New Zealand, and Spain.

Ryan and Zahra (2002) spotlighted the challenge of politics in branding cities and regions and focused on the significance of politics in the branding process. And, they reinforced that destination branding was not simply rational marketing activities: it was also a political act. Using New Zealand as the case study, they explored the changing nature of the public-private sector relationship, noting that changes in government policy and personnel cannot help but impact tourism promotion and practice.

Palmer (2002) examined the challenges and opportunities that electronic marketing offered destination branders. He focused on the wider impacts the web and e-commerce had on destination branding. Also, he showed that destinations could benefit from the internet by developing a coherent position in the market place, by increasing their market share by getting closer to customers, and subsequently by ensuring delivery of high levels of customer satisfaction.

The works of Pritchard and Morgan (1998, 2001), Gilmore (2001), Hankinson (2001), Crockett and Wood (2002), Slater (2002), Morgan, Pritchard, and Piggott (2003), Brown et al. (2004), and Ooi (2004) comprise case studies of successful destination branding initiatives. Pritchard and Morgan (1998) briefly discussed the role of branding in destination marketing and evaluated whether destinations could be branded as are other goods and services. They focused on a case study, discussing how Wales tried to brand in its key overseas market of the USA. This study explained that Wales adopted strategies whose main goal could be described as the creation of brand saliency-the development of an emotional relationship with the consumer through highly choreographed and focused communications campaigns. Also, it illustrated how destination managers in Wales could overcome three unique challenges in the branding initiatives such as a lack of control over the total marketing mix, relatively limited budgets, and political consideration.

Subsequently, Pritchard and Morgan (2001) developed a critical analysis of tourism representations through an investigation of destination branding strategies. Based on an analysis of the marketing campaigns of the Wales Tourist Board and Welsh local authorities, their study argued that the influence of repressive and liberating historical, political and cultural discourses could be discerned in the tourism representations used in contemporary branding strategies and these explained why Wales was differentially branded in its oversea and UK market.

Gilmore (2001) considered Spain as an example. She argued that thoughtful brand positioning gave a country a competitive advantage over other nations. Her framework suggested explained how the core of a country's brand must capture the spirit of its people and how it could be developed into a brand positioning after consideration of four essential factors, including macrotrends, target groups, competitors, and core competencies.

Hankinson (2001) reported on a qualitative study of 12 cities in the UK which sought to explore the role that branding played in the marketing of these destinations. The results suggested that branding as a concept was seen as relevant but not always understood or applied effectively. He provided insights into the key factors which affected the development of destinations as brands. The four factors identified as being of particular significance were organizational complexity and control, the management of partnerships, product complexity, and the measurement of success.

Crockett and Wood (2002) explained how, based on intensive consumer research, government-industry partnerships, and infra-structural developments, the state (Western Australia) went beyond tourism to create a state brand. They concluded that a successful destination brand must embrace a host of activities, including infra-structural development, product enhancement, protection against environmental degradation, changes in organizational culture and promotional partnerships, all based on intensive market research to identify consumer desires.

Slater (2002) explained how Louisiana continued to develop its powerful travel destination brand. Louisiana had wholeheartedly embraced branding to communicate and emphasized the ‘feel’ and ‘personality’ of the destination. Although it has many attractions, it was its brand identity that has positioned the state as one of the fastest growing tourism destination in USA. He concluded that the key to success wais the power behind the Louisiana brand (built around food, culture, music, scenery, architecture, and history), a substantial advertising budget, well-targeted media placements and an effective integrated campaign with advertising as its cornerstone.

Morgan, Pritchard, and Piggott (2003) explored the context and creation of the New Zealand brand and focused particularly on the political processes involved in successful brand management and on the vital role of public and private sector stakeholders. Therefore, they identified the stakeholders crucial to the delivery of the destination brand and examined the positioning process and the creation of its largely web-driven strategy. They concluded that through stakeholder partnerships and the harnessing of non-traditional media, Tourism New Zealand (TNZ) has been able to create a powerful travel destination brand, positioned as an appealing niche player in the global tourism industry.

Brown et al. (2004) focused on the relationship between destination branding, events, and the media in Australia. They discussed the growing importance of event tourism and examined the nature of destination image in the context of conceptual and applied framework. And, they considered the implication of the Sydney Olympic Games on Brand Australia and provided how Australia destination marketers shrewdly harnessed the global reach of the Games to promote not only Sydney's, but the whole of Australia's tourism image to the world. Their study clearly demonstrated how the 'best ever games" was used to advance Brand Australia strategically.

According to Ooi (2004), Singapore is regarded as the capital and hub of the New Asia; the gateway which tourists should visit or pass through when they are in the region. He explained that 'New Asia-Singapore' brand embraced the regional brand and strategy, as well as provided a focused marketing direction for the destination as a stand-alone place. He emphasized the importance of materializing the brand expectations, discussing how Singapore made ‘New Asia-Singapore’ live by directing tourists’ attention to Asia in the largely modern city that was Singapore.

As already mentioned earlier, many studies explained destination branding in the wider context, explored challenges and opportunities of destination branding, and provided case studies of successful destination branding initiatives. However, even if there are many studies of destination branding, destination branding has attracted relatively little interest in theory-based studies and does not have appropriate methodologies to measure the relationship between destination branding and consumer behavior. The application of branding certain destination such as nations, states, and cities is regarded as, at best, complex and at worst impossible (Morgan Pritchard, and Pride, 2002).

Cai (2002)’s study delineated both concepts and proposed a conceptual model of destination branding. The model was founded on the spreading activation theory and extended from the image formation process framework, drawing on works of prominent branding scholars. His study suggested that cooperative branding resulted in a consistent attributes-based image across multiple rural communities as perceived by tourists, by building stronger linkages of the image to brand identity and more favorable affective and attitudes-based brand associations for a region. His study adapted the theoretical concepts of general branding to tourism destination marketing. However, although it applied the fundamental concepts of branding to tourism areas, it explained only destination image, which was just one component of the destination brand.

Therefore, the following sections review some literature in order to provide a conceptual model that accounts for the relationship between destination brand and consumer behavior. Based on studies by Aaker (1997) and Aaker and Joachimstaler (2000), which provided the components of brand equity, the components of destination brand are transferred. Destination image, perceived quality, and destination awareness are explained as the constructs of destination and tourists' satisfaction and destination loyalty is identified as the constructs of consumer behavior, and account for the relationship among the three components and consumer behavior.

2.6.1 Destination Image

Mental images are a "symbolic process" based on stored experiences in associative memory regarding objectives and events. The image provides a "…mental representative of meaning…" (Paivio 1969). According to Aaker (1991), brand image is a set of associations, usually organized in some meaningful way. Brand image represent perceptions which may or may not reflect objective reality. Also, brand image is usually considered as the combined effect of brand associations (Biel 1992), or more specifically, as the consumer's perceptions of the "…brand's tangible and intangible association" (Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard 1993). Kapferer (1992) suggested that the consumer forms an image through a synthesis of all the signals emitted by the brand. Also, he argued that brand image results from the consumer decoding, extracting, and interpreting the brand signal.

Keller (1993, 1998) defined brand image as " perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory." And, he explained that a unique, strong, and favorable brand image permitted the brand to be strategically differentiated and positioned in the consumer's mind, contributing to the potential for enhanced brand equity (Pitta & Katsanis 1995). Based on Keller's definition, the destination image can be defined as perceptions about a place as reflected by the association held in tourists' memories (Cai 2002).

Studies of destination image are abundant and can be traced back to the early 70s. Gunn (1972) first proposed that the evolution of tourism image could be categorized into two stages: organic image, which dealt with tourists' impressions of a destination without physically having visited the destination, and induced image, which was forged through promotional materials or actual visitation. Hunt (1975) examined image as a development factor and argued that the images, beliefs and perceptions that people have about a destination could influence the growth of a tourist area as much as tangible resources.

Since Gunn (1972) and Hunt's (1975) study, significant progress has been made in advancing the understanding image measurement (Chen & Uysal 2002; Driscoll, Lawson, & Niven 1994; Echtner & Ritchie 1993; Gartner 1989; Goodrich 1978); its role in tourists' decision making process (Baloglu 1999; Crompton 1978; Fakeye & Crompton 1991; Goodall 1991; Milman & Pizam 1995; Moutinho 1987; Woodside & Sherrell 1977); its components and formation (Baloglu & McCleary 1999a; Baloglu & McCleary 1999b; Beerli & Martin 2004a; Dann 1996; Gartner 1993; Gunn 2001; Phelps 1986; Um & Crompton 1990); and its relationship with tourists' satisfaction (Andreu, Bigne, & Cooper 2000; Beerli & Martin 2004b; Bigne, Sanchez, & Sanchez 2001; Bonn, Joseph, & Dai 2005; Chon 1990; Hu & Ritchie 1993; Ryan 1994).

First, Goodrich (1978), Gartner (1989), and Echtner & Ritchie (1993) explained the measurement of destination images. Goodrich (1978) argued that destination images were simply either primary (formed by visitation) or secondary (formed by information received from external sources). In Gartner's (1989) study, a variety of methodologies used to access destination image can be identified and, differ in the format of collecting information (multi-dimensional scales, semantic differential or Likert items, free proposal of adjectives and repertory-grid technique) and in the attributes used to assess destination images. Echtner & Ritchie (1993) developed a conceptual framework for destination images providing a list of thirty-five destination attributes. They were measured by means of scales, and suggested that the destination image can be structured using three continuums, including attribute-holistic, functional-psychological, and common-unique. The attribute-holistic continuum proposed that destination image should be composed of perceptions of individual features, or attributes, and in terms of more gestalt, or holistic impressions. The functional-psychological continuum considered the functional images as directly observable or measurable, in contrast to psychological attributes that were more intangible or difficult to observe and measure. The common-unique continuum was based on the premise that destination images could vary from those that are based on common characteristics, to those were based on the most unique (Andreu et al. 2000).

Second, destination image is important because of the role it plays in the potential tourists' decision-making processes. Moutinho (1987) distinguished three components of image formation, including level of knowledge about the destination, beliefs and attitudes associated with the product, and the expectations created by the product. Um & Crompton (1990) stated that beliefs about the attributes of a destination were formed by individuals being exposed to external stimuli, but the nature of those beliefs will vary depending on the internal factors of the tourists. Therefore, the perceived image of a destination will be formed through the image projected by the destination and touristz' own needs, motivations, prior knowledge, preferences and other personal characteristics. Fakeye & Crompton (1991) argued that there was a third stage of image formation. They suggested, "Upon visiting…selected destinations, a tourist will develop a more complex image resulting from actual contact with the destination" (p.11). Goodall (1991) explained that destination image formed the basis of the evaluation or selection process and thus provided the linkage between motivations and destination selection. Also, Milman & Pizam (1995) suggested that destination image consisted of three components: the product (e.g., quality of attraction, cost); the behavior and attitude of destination hosts; and the environment (e.g., weather, scenery, facilities). They argued that destination image should be considered to be a mixture of both positive and negative perceptions because they represent reality before tourists make their final decisions about travel destination.

Third, some studies (Baloglu & McCleary 1999a; Baloglu & McCleary 1999b; Beerli & Martin 2004; Gartner 1993) enlightened the components and formation of destination image. Gartner (1993) expanded Gunn's two dimensional model and proposed a continuum of eight image formation agents, which included overt induced I, overt induced II, covert induced I, covert induced II, autonomous, unsolicited organic, solicited organic, and organic. This typology focused on the effect of different information sources on destination image formation. Also, he posited that a destination image was " formed by three distinctly different but hierarchically interrelated components, including cognitive, affective, and conative.

Baloglu & McCleary (1999a, b) tended to consider image as being formed by the reasoned and the emotional interpretations of the tourist and as the consequence of two closely interrelated components: the perceptive/cognitive evaluation, which referred to the tourist's own knowledge and beliefs about the object and affective appraisals, which referred to the tourist's feelings toward the object. Baloglu & McCleary (1999a) found that a destination image was formed by both stimulus factors and tourists' characteristics. Consequently, Baloglu & McCleary (1999b) compared U.S. international pleasure travelers' images of four Mediterranean destinations and revealed that significant differences existed in all image components between the four destination countries. Both studies provided important implications for strategic image management and could aid in designing and implementing marketing programs for creating and enhancing tourism destination images.

Beerli & Martin (2004a) analyzed the relationship between the different components of the perceived image and the factors which influenced its formation. These included both sources of information and stimuli influencing the forming of perceptions and evaluations of destinations and motivation, accumulated tour experiences and socio-demographic characteristics. They classified all factors influencing the image assessment made by tourists into nine dimensions, which included natural resources, general infrastructure, tourist infrastructure, tourist leisure and recreation, culture, history and art, political and economic factors, natural environment, social environment, and atmosphere of the place.

Fourth, destination image plays a fundamental role in the success of tourist destinations, since image, seen as a mental picture formed by a set of attributes that defined the destination in its various dimensions, exercises a strong influence on tourist behavior in the tourism sector (Beerli & Martin 2004b). Also, the destination image perceived influences tourist satisfaction and intention to repeat the visit in the future, depending on the destination's capacity to provide experiences that correspond with their needs and fit the image they had of the destination (Andreu, Bigne, & Cooper 2000; Beerli & Martin 2004b; Chon 1990; Court & Lupton 1997; Binge, Sanchez, & Sanchez 2001; Hu & Ritchie 1993; Joppe, Martin, & Waalen 2001).

Specifically, Chon (1990) adopted a cognitive consumer behavior theory known as evaluative congruity to create an integrated model of destination image and traveler buying behavior. The central postulate of the model was that a tourist's buying behavior could be explained through a framework of imagery change during the entire travel experience. He found that a positive image and positive travel experience could result in a moderately positive evaluation of a destination and tourists' satisfaction. Also, Court and Lupton (1997) found as a result of their study of the image of New Mexico, that the image of the destination positively affected tourists' satisfaction and an intention to revisit in the future.

Binge et al. (2001) focused on the relationship between the image of a destination as perceived by tourists and their behavioral intention, and examined the relationship between quality and satisfaction and between these variables and the tourist's behavior variables. They confirmed that a destination image had a positive influence on tourists' satisfaction as well as tourist loyalty. Based on these studies, the two hypotheses follows:

H1: Destination image as part of destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty.

H2: Destination image as part of destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction.

2.6.2 Perceived Quality

Perceived quality, one of destination branding constructs in this study, is an antecedent of customer satisfaction and future intentions (loyalty) (McDougall & Levesque 2000). Perceived quality can be defined as “the customer’s perception of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service with respect to its intended purpose, relative to alternatives (Aaker 1991 P.85).” Perceived quality cannot necessarily be objectively determined, in part because it is a perception and also because judgments about what is important to customers are involved. Also, Aaker (1991) mentioned that perceived quality differs from satisfaction. A customer can be satisfied because the customer has low expectations about the performance level. High perceived quality is not consistent with low expectations. Because perceived quality in this study can be adopted from the conceptualization of service quality, this section reviews some literature that is related to concepts and measurements of service quality (Ekinci 2003).

According to Brady and Cronin (2001), the early conceptualizations of service quality (Gronroos 1982, 1984; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry 1985) were based on the disconfirmation paradigm employed in the physical goods literature. It suggested that quality resulted from a comparison of perceived with expected performance, as was reflected in Gronroos’s seminal conceptualization of service quality that compared the perceived service to the expected service. In addition to adapting the disconfirmation paradigm to the measurement of service quality, Gronroos (1982, 1984) identified two service quality dimensions such as functional quality and technical quality. A functional quality represents how the service is delivered; that is, it defines customers' perceptions of the interactions that take place during service delivery. Technical quality reflects the outcome of the service act, or what the customer receives in the service encounter.

The confirmation paradigm also is the basis of Parasuraman et al.'s (1985, 1988) SERVQUAL model, which views service quality as the gap between the expected level of service and customer perceptions of the level received. Whereas Gronroos (1982) suggested two dimensions, Parasuraman et al. (1988) proposed five dimensions, including reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibility characteristics of the service experience. Reliability is defined as the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately. Responsiveness is the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service. Assurance refers to the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence. Empathy is the caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customer. And, tangibility refers to physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel.

Even though the SERVQUAL has been extensively used to measure service quality, many researchers have criticized its applicability. Therefore, several studies suggested that the SERVQUAL conceptualization of service quality (Boulding et al. 1993; Brady & Cronin 2001; Cronin & Taylor 1992; Dabholkar, Thorpe, & Rentz 1996; Ekinci 2003; Knutson et al. 2003; Rust & Oliver 1994) and the relevance of the disconfirmation of expectations as the basis for measuring service quality were inadequate (Carman 1990; DeSarbo et al. 1994).

Carman (1990) was perhaps the first to note that customers tended to break service quality dimensions into various sub-dimensions. He argued that service quality evaluations were highly complex processes that may operate at several levels of abstraction. Therefore, such a multidimensional and multileveled structure more fully accounted for the complexity of human perceptions.

Cronin and Taylor (1992) proposed that service quality should be conceptualized and measured as an attitude. They further suggested that the SERVQUAL was a better measure of service quality if used as a performance-based measure, without a comparison of expectation. They examined the performance-only model and found that the performance-only measures were superior to contrast measures utilizing expectations.

Rust and Oliver (1994) were highly interested in the technical and functional dimensions. They explained that the overall perception of service quality was based on the customer's evaluation of three dimensions of service encounters, including the service product (technical quality), the service delivery (functional quality), and the service environment. Also, Dabholkar et al. (1996) identified and tested a hierarchical conceptualization of service quality that proposed three levels, including customers' overall perception of service quality, primary dimensions, and subdimensions.

Based on Gronroos (1982, 1984), Cronin and Taylor (1992), Rust and Oliver (1994), and Dabholkar et al. (1996), Brady and Cronin (2001) provided a conceptual model of service quality. They argued that customers formed service quality perceptions on the basis of their evaluations of three primary dimensions such as interaction quality, service quality, and outcome quality. Therefore, their study consolidated multiple service quality conceptualizations into a single, comprehensive, multidimensional framework with a strong theoretical base. Conclusively, their study addressed three basic issues; what defines service quality perception, how service quality perceptions are formed, and how important it is where the service experience take place. Thus, the perceived quality of the current study could be defined and measured on the basis of Brady and Cronin's (2001) study.

Many researchers in both marketing, and hospitality and tourism have studied the relationship between perceived quality and customer satisfaction (Baker & Crompton 2000; Fornell et al. 1996; Oliver 1999; Oh 1999, 2000; Cronin et al. 2000; Ekinci 2003; Gallarza & Saura 2005; Knutson et al. 2003;McDougall and Levesque 2000, Petrick 2004; Petrick et al. 2001; Petrick and Backmann 2002). Most of these studies proposed that perceived quality and satisfaction were distinct constructs, and there was a causal relationship between two constructs, and that perception of quality affected feelings of satisfaction which, in turn, influenced customer's future purchase behavior. For example, Knutson et al. (2003) explained the causal relationships among customer expectation, perceived quality, customer satisfaction, and intention by using the American Consumer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). Also, perceived quality can determine satisfaction because satisfaction is the result of customers' perceived quality (Anderson et al. 1994; Gnoth 1994; Kotler et al. 1996).

Especially, in tourism, many studies (Baker & Crompton 2000; Bigne et al. 2000; Crompton & Love 1995; Ekinci & Sirakaya 2004; Getz et al. 2001; Heung & Cheng 2000; Kozak & Remington 2000; Petrick 2004) explained that perceived quality has a positive influence on tourists' satisfaction, as well as that perceived quality is an antecedent of both satisfaction and loyalty. Based on these studies, two hypotheses follow:

H3: Perceived quality as part of destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty.

H4: Perceived quality as part of destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction.

2.6.3 Destination Awareness

As mentioned earlier, the concept of destination awareness is transferred from that of brand awareness in the marketing literature. Thus, this study reviews the studies that explain and define the brand awareness.

Awareness can keep the brand in the consumer's evoked set, thereby increasing the probability that the brand will subsequently be purchased (Hoyer & Brown 1990). Hoy and Brown (1990) referred to brand awareness as a rudimentary level of brand knowledge involving, at the least, recognition of the brand name. Awareness represents the lowest end of a continuum of brand knowledge that ranges from simple recognition of the brand name to a highly developed cognitive structure based on detailed information.

Aaker (1991) defined brand awareness as the ability of a potential buyer to recognize or recall that a brand is a member of a certain product category. Also, he explained that brand awareness involves a continuum ranging from an uncertain feeling that the brand was recognized, to a belief that it was the only one in the product class. This continuum could be represented by three different levels of brand awareness, including brand recognition, brand recall, and top-of-mind awareness. Especially, brand recognition is the minimum level of brand awareness and the basic first step in the communication task. It provides the brand with a sense of familiarity which can sometimes drive the buying decision. Brand recall is based on asking a person to name the brand in a product class.

According to Keller (1993), the first dimension distinguishing brand knowledge is brand awareness. It is related to the strength of the brand node or trace in memory, as reflected by consumers' ability to identify the brand under different conditions (Rossiter & Percy 1987). That is, brand name awareness relates to the likelihood that a brand name will come to mind and the ease with which it does so. And, he explained that brand awareness consists of brand recognition and brand recall. Brand recognition relates to consumers' ability to confirm prior exposures to the brand when given the brand as a cue. In other words, brand recognition requires that consumers correctly discriminate the brand as having been seen or heard previously. Brand recall is defined as consumers' ability to retrieve the brand when given the product category, the needs fulfilled by the category, or by some other type of probe as a cue. In other words, brand recall requires that consumers correctly generate the brand from memory.

Furthermore, Keller gave details supporting the idea that brand awareness plays an important role in consumer decision making for three major reasons. First, it is important that consumers think of the brand when they think about the product category. Raising brand awareness increases the likelihood that the brand will be a member of the consideration set (Baker et al. 1986; Nedungadi 1990)-the handful of brands that receive serious consideration for purchase. Second, brand awareness can affect decisions about the brands in the consideration set, even though there are essentially no other brand associations. Finally, brand awareness affects consumer decision-making by influencing the formation and strength of brand association in the brand image.

Because brand recognition provides the brand with a sense of familiarity which can sometimes drive the buying decision (Aaker 1991), the study explains the concept of familiarity. Familiarity has been regarded as one component of the consumer knowledge construct (Cordell 1997; Park, Mothersbaugh, & Feick 1994). Also, familiarity of consumers has been considered as an important factor in consumer decision-making (Bettman & Park 1980; Park & Lessing 1981). Consumers' familiarity with a product is measured as a continuous variable that reflects their direct and indirect knowledge of a product. Several researchers examined familiarity as the consumers' perception of how much they know about the attributes of various choice alternatives they are considering (Moorthy et al. 1997).

In tourism, some researchers who examined tourists' behavior agreed that familiarity of tourists with a destination was likely to influence tourists' behavior and decision-making (Gursoy, 2001). And, familiarity with a destination is a significant concept for tourist destinations because of its vital role in the tourist destination selection process. Therefore, the importance of tourists' familiarity is well recognized among tourism researchers (Etzel & Wahler 1985; Fodness & Murray 1997, 1998, 1999; Purdue 1985; Schul & Crompton 1983; Snepenger & Snepenger 1993; Vogt & Fesenmaier 1998; Woodside & Ronkainen 1980).

Familiarity is mostly measured by a single indicator, and often referred to as previous trip experience (Dann 1996; Fridgen 1997; Chon 1991; Hu & Ritchie 1993;

Milman & Pizam 1995; Woodside & Ronkainen 1980). Therefore, in previous studies the construct is mostly operationalized by measuring the number of previous trips taken to a particular destination.

Fridgen (1987) studied tourists' perception of which parts of Michigan they thought to be recreation and tourism regions. He compared those who were familiar with the state with those who were unfamiliar, and concluded that familiarity (level of knowledge and actual visitation) with a destination had a positive effect on tourists' perception and images. Chon (1991) compared the image of Korea held between those traveling to Korea (pre-travel) and those returning from Korea (post-travel). The analysis indicated that significant differences existed in the perceptions of Korea between those who actually experienced the destination and those who had not. Post-visitors' perceptions were found more positive than pre-visitors' perceptions.

Hu and Ritchie (1993) noted that familiarity with a destination, being a major influence on destination perceptions and attractiveness, would incorporate geographic distance, level of knowledge, and previous visitation. They reported significant differences between the images of non-visitors and visitors to the destinations. They pointed out that familiarity had an influence on perception of destination and tourists' satisfaction.

Moreover, Milman and Pizam (1995), operationalizing and measuring familiarity as previous experience, found significant differences between those who visited the state (visitors) and those who were aware of it (non-visitors), and found that respondents who were familiar with (previously visited) Central Florida had a more positive image of the destination than those who were only aware of it.

Baloglu (2001) developed a destination familiarity index as a composite of experiential (previous experience) and informational familiarity and investigated image variations of Turkey by the familiarity index developed. He found significant differences among three familiarity groups; the higher the familiarity, the more positive was the image of Turkey on the dimensions. And, the higher familiarity groups were more positively perceived and satisfied than the lower familiarity groups. The above studies revealed and found positive relationships among the familiarity with destination (destination awareness), destination image, tourist satisfaction, and tourist loyalty. Therefore, the two hypotheses follow:

H5: Destination awareness as part of destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty.

H6: Destination awareness as part of destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction.

2.7 TOURIST BEHAVIOR

2.7.1 Tourist Satisfaction

Because of its potential influence on customer behavioral intentions, customer satisfaction has been the subject of much attention in the marketing literature (Bitner & Hubbert 1994; Oliver 1977, 1980,1981, 1993; Oliver & Swan 1989; Rust & Oliver 1994). Also, because customer satisfaction can appear to be one requirement for the type of continued interest in a product that might lead to repeat purchasing, researchers have turned increasing interest to the study of customer satisfaction (Oliver 1993). Satisfaction is described as "an evaluation of an emotion" (Hunt 1977), suggesting that it reflects the degree to which a customer believes that the possession and/or use of a service evokes positive feelings (Rust & Oliver 1994).

In the tourism literature, satisfaction has also been playing an important role in planning marketable tourism products and services. Tourist satisfaction is important to successful destination marketing because it influences the choice of destination, the consumption of products and services, and the decision to return (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Oppermann 2000; Yoon & Uysal 2005). And, an assessment of tourist satisfaction has been attempted using various perspectives and theories. Most of the studies that have been conducted to evaluate consumer satisfaction have utilized models of expectancy-disconfirmation (Barsky 1992; Barsky & Labagh 1992; Chon 1989; Francken & Van Raaij 1981; Huh 2002; Huh & Uysal 2003; Oliver 1980; Pizam & Milman 1993), equity (Fisk & Coney 1982; Fisk & Young 1985; Heskett, Sasser, & Schlesinger 1997; Oliver & DeSarbo 1988; Oliver & Swan 1989; Swan et al 1985), norm (Cadotte, Woodruff, & Jenkins 1987; Latour & Peat 1979), and perceived overall performance (Pizam, Neuman, & Reichel 1978; Tse & Wilton 1988).

According to expectancy-disconfirmation theory based on Oliver (1980), customers develop expectations about a product before purchasing. Subsequently, they compare actual performance with those expectations. If the actual performance is better than their expectations, this leads to positive disconfirmation, which means that the customer is highly satisfied and will be more willing to purchase the product again. If the actual performance is worse than expectations, it leads to negative disconfirmation, which means the customer is dissatisfied and will likely look for alternative products for the next purchase.

Chon (1989) found that tourist satisfaction was based on the goodness of fit between their expectation about the destination and the perceived evaluative outcome of the experience at the destination area, which is simply the result of a comparison between his/her previous images of the destination and what they actually see, feel, and achieve at the destination. Furthermore, Chon and Olsen (1991) provided an intensive literature review of tourist satisfaction. One thing to be noted, however, is that although the posited social cognition theory offers an alternative way of explaining satisfaction processes, its methodological mechanism is analogous to that of expectancy–disconfirmation theory. In other words, the concepts of congruity and incongruity can be interpreted similarly to the concepts of confirmation and disconfirmation, both of which can result in either positive or negative directions.

Barsky (1992) and Barsky and Labagh (1992) introduced the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm into lodging research. Basically, the proposed model in these studies was that customer satisfaction was the function of disconfirmation, measured by nine “expectations met” factors that were weighted by attribute – specific importance. The model was tested with data collected from 100 random subjects via guest comment cards. As a result, customer satisfaction was found to be correlated with a customer’s willingness to return.

Pizam and Milman (1993) utilized Oliver’s (1980) expectancy-disconfirmation model to improve the predictive power of travelers’ satisfaction. They introduced the basic dynamic nature of the disconfirmation model into hospitality research, while testing part of the original model in a modified form. In order to assess the causal relationship between two different disconfirmation methods, they employed a regression model with a single "expectation – met" measure as the dependent variable, and 21 difference–score measures as the independent variables. Some studies on customer satisfaction were also notable in tourism behavior research.

Swan et al. (1985), Oliver and DeSarbo (1988), and Oliver and Swan (1989) stated that in specific types of purchase transactions customers would compare the inputs and outputs of salespersons and institutions with their own inputs and outputs. This is the basis of equity theory (Fisk & Coney 1982; Fisk & Young 1985). Especially, Oliver and Swan (1989) were interested in equity theory. Customer satisfaction can be seen as a relationship between the costs of what the customer spends and the rewards (benefits) he/she anticipates. Price, benefits, time, and effort are major factors in determining satisfaction (Heskett, Sasser, & Schlesinger 1997). Therefore, if tourists receive benefits or value based on their time, effort, and money for travel, the destination is worthwhile.

Latour and Peat (1979) proposed the norm theory. Norms serve as reference points for judging the product, and dissatisfaction comes into play as a result of disconfirmation relative to these norms. Several researchers have replaced norm with the ideal standard in the literature (Sirgy 1984; Francken & Van Raaij 1981). They hypothesize that leisure satisfaction is determined by the customer's perceived disparity between the preferred and leisure experiences, as well as by the perceptions of barriers that prevent the customer from achieving the desired experience. The theory uses some form of comparison standard with other products. Tourists can compare current travel destinations with other alternative destinations or places visited in the past. The differences between present and past experiences can be a norm used to evaluate travel satisfaction. Thus, comparing current travel destinations with other, similar places that they may have visited can assess the satisfaction of tourists.

Tse and Wilton (1988) developed a perceived performance theory. According to the theory, customer dissatisfaction is only a function of the actual performance, regardless of customers' expectation. In other words, the actual performance and initial expectations should be considered independently, rather than comparing performance with past experiences. Thus, in the theory, tourists' evaluation of their satisfaction with past experiences is considered, regardless of their expectations. The theory is effective when tourists do not know what they want to enjoy and experience and do not have any knowledge about their destination circumstances, and only their actual experiences are evaluated to assess tourist satisfaction.

Bowen (2002) introduced a new creative solution to the measurement of consumer satisfaction/disconfirmation by using participant observation. Generally, customers' satisfaction has been measured through the conventional approach-most likely a before-and-after style customer service questionnaire (CSQ). However, he claimed that CSQ was not appropriate to measure customer satisfaction, because customer satisfaction should be understood and measured in terms of a time continuum rather than at just one point in time.

Many studies in the marketing and tourism literature concluded that customer satisfaction had a positive influence on customer loyalty, and that loyalty was a consequence of customer satisfaction (Baker & Crompton 2000; Cronin et al. 2000; Fornell et al. 1996; Kozak & Rimmington 2000; McDougall & Levesque 2000; Patrick

2004; Petrick et al. 2001; Petrick & Beckman 2002; Oh 1999: Oh & Parks 1997; Tam 2000; Yoon & Uysal 2005).

Ryan (1995) reported a high incidence of repeat visitation among the responding mature travelers to the Mediterranean island of Majorca. He revealed that respondents had visited the island at least once for the previous 5 years, indicating a very destination loyal segment. Ryan suggested that the high loyalty was consistent with the importance of past satisfactory holiday experiences in determining destination choice.

Oppermann (2000) explored the application and usefulness of destination loyalty. He suggested that the degree of tourists' loyalty to a destination was reflected in their intentions to revisit the destination and in their recommendations to others. He concluded that satisfaction with travel experiences significantly contributed to destination loyalty.

Baker and Crompton (2000) studied the relative impact and interrelationships among the quality of performance, tourist satisfaction, and tourist behavioral intention. They revealed and confirmed that satisfaction was enhanced by higher perception of performance quality which was consistent with the quality-satisfaction-behavioral intentions relationship flow that conceptually guided the study. In addition, the study revealed that highly satisfied tourists were more loyal, increasing the probability that they would return and that they would spread positive word-of-mouth about the festival. The strong linkage between satisfaction and willingness-to-pay more was consistent with the belief that those who are highly satisfied are willing to pay more for the opportunity.

Bigne et al. (2001) examined the relationships among quality, satisfaction, and tourists' behavior. They revealed that those who were highly satisfied with the destination were more likely to return in the future and to recommend the destination to others.

Yoon and Uysal (2005) offered an integrated approach to understanding tourist motivation and attempted to extend the theoretical and empirical evidence on the causal relationships among motivation, tourist satisfaction, and destination loyalty. They concluded that tourist destination loyalty was positively affected by tourist satisfaction with the experience of the destination. Based on the above studies, the fourth hypothesis follows:

H7: Tourist satisfaction has a significant positive influence on tourist loyalty.

2.7.2 Tourist Loyalty

Loyalty as a key marketing tool is so widely accepted that its value has been deemed to be "self-evident to every business person" (Reichheld 1996). Also, the concept and degree of loyalty is one of the critical indicators used to measure the success of a marketing strategy (Flavian, Martinez, & Polo 2001). With such significance, it is not surprising that the importance of brand loyalty and consumer loyalty has been recognized in the marketing literature for at least 40 years (Chaudhuri & Holbrook 2001; Oppermann 2000).

Within the literature, marketers have generally shared a fundamental understanding of what loyalty means and how it is created. Loyalty has been traditionally understood to be reflected by repeated purchase behavior and/or the expression of a favorable attitude toward such behavior (Jacoby & Chestnut 1978). In this connection, Aaker (1991) discussed the role of loyalty in the brand equity process and specifically noted that brand loyalty leads to certain marketing advantages such as reduced marketing costs, more new customers, and greater trade leverage. In addition, Dick and Basu (1994) suggested other loyalty-related marketing advantages, such as favorable word of mouth and greater resistance among loyal customers to competitive strategies. Furthermore, brand-loyal customers might be willing to pay more for a brand because they perceive some unique value in the brand that no alternative can provide (Jacoby & Chestnut 1978; Reichheld 1996).

Jacoby and Chestnut (1978) used a large number of approaches in order to define brand loyalty. They suggested a great divergence in opinion of what constitutes brand loyalty, how it should be measured, or perhaps simply in some case the availability of data (Oppermann 2000). They distinguished three approaches of brand loyalty, including a behavioral approach, an attitudinal approach, and a composite approach. First, the earliest approaches to loyalty measurement are based on consumers' behavior, often based on actual purchasing behavior or, in other cases, on reported purchasing behavior. Jacoby and Chestnut (1978) suggested that behavioral approaches can be divided into five types: brand purchase sequence, brand purchase proportion, brand purchase probability, synthesis measures, and miscellaneous measures. Second, in the attitudinal approaches, based on consumer brand preferences or intention to buy, consumer loyalty is an attempt on the part of consumers to go beyond overt behavior and express their loyalty in terms of psychological commitment or statement of preferences. Third, the composite approaches are the integration of the behavioral and attitudinal approaches. It has been argued that consumers who purchase and have loyalty to particular brands must have a positive attitude toward those brands. However, this approach has limitations in that not all the weighting or quantified scores may apply to both the behavioral and attitudinal factors, and they may have different measurements.

Oliver (1997) used the cognitive-affective-conation pattern in order to explain loyalty. He argued that consumers could become loyal at each attitudinal phase relating to different elements of the attitude development structure. Specifically, consumers are theorized to become loyal in a cognitive sense first, then later in an affective sense, still later in a conative manner, and finally in a behavioral manner, which is described as action inertia. First, in the cognitive loyalty phase, the brand attribute information available to the consumer indicates that one brand is preferable to its alternative. Cognition can be based on prior or vicarious knowledge or on recent experience-based information. Loyalty at this stage is directed toward the brand because of information (attribute performance levels). Second, at the affective loyalty phase, a liking or attitude toward the brand has developed on the basis of cumulatively satisfying usage occasions. This reflects the pleasure dimension of the satisfaction definition. Third, the next phase of loyalty development is the conative (behavioral intention) stage, as influenced by repeated episodes of positive affect toward the brand. Conative loyalty is a loyalty state that contains what appears to be a deeply held commitment to buy. Fourth, in the action control stage, the motivated intention in the previous loyalty state is transformed into readiness. The action control paradigm proposes that this is accomplished by an additional desire to overcome obstacles that might prevent action. In conclusion, Oliver (1997) argued that cognitive loyalty focuses on the brand’s performance; affective loyalty is directed toward the brand’s likeableness; conative loyalty is experienced when the consumer focuses on wanting to rebuy the brand, and action loyalty is commitment to the action of rebuying.

In the area of tourism and leisure/recreation activities, many researchers have studied the concept of consumer loyalty in the last two decades (Backmann & Crompton 1999a, 1999b; Baloglu 2001; Mazanec 2000; Oppermann 2000; Pritchard & Howard 1997; Ryan 1995; Selin et al. 1988, Yoon & Uysal 2005). These studies have usually measured consumer loyalty by one of Jacoby and Chestnut's (1978) approaches.

Ryan (1995) and Oppermann (2000) argued that destination loyalty was seen in a behavioral approach and that behavioral approaches did have the advantage of being fairly easy to implement by the tourism industry because some of the data were already available. Especially, Ryan noted that multiple repeat vacationers could express a high level of loyalty with the destination.

Backman & Crompton (1999a) used an attitudinal approach based on consumer brand preferences or intention to buy and word-of –mouth. They explained that loyalty could measure tourists' strength of affection toward a destination, as well as accounting for an additional portion of unexplained variance that behavioral approaches did not address. Thus, attitudinal approach could explain why and how tourists were willing to revisit or recommend the destination to other potential tourists. On the other hand, Yoon & Uysal (2005) measured the destination loyalty by using a composite approach which was an integration of the behavioral and attitudinal approaches.

2.8 TRIP TYPES

People travel to a particular place for sightseeing, visiting friends and relatives, taking a vacation, having a good time, and participating in business meetings. The type of travel relates to the primary purpose for which the travel is taken. Since not all tourists travel for the same purpose, the segmentation of the travel market is frequently done by type of travel. The four most commonly used categories by which to segment tourists by travel type are: government or corporate business travel, visiting friends and relatives, personal business travel, and pleasure travel (Nesbit 1973). Mills and Morrison (1992) classify tourists into business tourists and pleasure tourists.

Since this study focuses on the leisure tourism market, the primary segment such as pleasure vacation travel will be examined. Most of previous studies of the leisure tourism market have concentrated on pleasure vacationers. Especially, they have studied vacation travelers' perceptions and behaviors (decision-making style, satisfaction, and loyalty) for different types of destinations (Beerli & Martin 2004; Bronner & De Hoog 1985; Baker & Crompton 2000; Crompton & Love 1995; Huh & Uysal 2003; Kozak & Rimmington 2000; Lee, Graefe, & Burns 2004; Patrick 2004; Petrick et al. 2001; Petrick & Beckman 2002; Yoon & Uysal 2005).

According to Goeldner & Ritchie (2003), there are five types of destinations, including natural destinations, cultural/heritage destinations, recreation destinations, entertainment destinations, and event destinations. First, natural destination includes landscape, seascape, parks, mountains, Coasts, forests, and islands. Second, cultural/heritage destinations include historical sites, architectural sites, monuments, industrial sites, museums, ethnic sites, concerts, and theaters. Third, recreational destinations include sight-seeing and sports activities, such as golf, swimming, tennis, hiking, biking, and snow sports. Fourth, entertainment attractions include theme parks, amusement parks, casinos, cruises, shopping facilities, and cinemas. Finally, event attractions include megaevents, festivals, religious events, and sports events.

On the other hand, according to a U. S. Pleasure Travel Market in Canada Survey (1995), trip types were categorized into five types, such as outdoor trips, resort trips, city trips, cultural/heritage trips, and theme park trips. Outdoor trips include activities such as camping, hiking, rafting, fishing, etc. Lee et al. (2004) explores the interrelationships among service quality, satisfaction, and behavioral intention among forest visitors. A resort trip has a variety of activities, such as beaches, skiing, tennis, golfing, etc. Beerli and Martin (2004) analyze the influence of tourists' internal characteristics or personal factors on the different components of perceived image in the Canary Island, Spain. And, Yoon and Uysal (2005) attempted to extend the theoretical and empirical evidence on the causal relationships among motivation, satisfaction, and loyalty. Petrick and Backman (2002) investigated the determinants of golf travelers' overall satisfaction. A city trip includes shopping, enjoying entertainment, visiting museums and theaters, and/or just enjoying the city. Petrick et al. (2001) investigated the relationship of entertainment travelers' past vacation behavior, satisfaction, perceived value, and intentions to revisit and repurchase. A cultural/heritage trip is taken mainly for the purpose of visiting a historical site or cultural attraction. A theme park trip is taken primarily for the purpose of visiting a major theme park. Huh & Uysal (2005) examined tourist satisfaction with cultural/heritage sites (the Virginia Historic Triangle).

Besides the five trip type categories, Petrick (2004) examined the influence of quality, value, and satisfaction on cruise passengers' behavioral intentions. Baker and Crompton (2000) conceptualized the relationship of performance quality and satisfaction to behavioral intention.

The results of those studies above indicated that there were differences in the relationships among tourist perceptions and tourist behavior (decision-making style, satisfaction, and loyalty) in terms of destination type. Therefore, three hypotheses follow:

H8: The relationship between destination image as part of destination branding and tourist satisfaction is moderated by trip types.

H9: The relationship between perceived quality as part of destination branding and tourist satisfaction is moderated by trip types.

H10: The relationship between destination awareness as part of destination branding and tourist satisfaction is moderated by trip types.

2.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter defined the constructs to be studied based on conceptualization and previous empirical and theoretical studies. The first section provided a review of relevant concepts, including relationship marketing, the customers-brands relationship, and destination relationship marketing. The second section mainly focused on a review of the theories to be employed in this study, such as signaling theory and brand equity theory. The third section examined the literature of the components of destination brand (destination image, perceived quality, and destination awareness). Then, the last section discussed the relevant literature that pertains to tourist behavior (tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty).

The next chapter provides a summary of research hypotheses and discusses the research design and methodology in detail. The items that were used to measure each construct are also discussed in a brief manner.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This study develops and tests an integrative, systematic model of destination branding and tourist behavior. From a statistical standpoint, it is important to examine complex multivariate relationships among a set of constructs rather than simple bivariate relationships. The methodology employed, structural equation analysis, allows simultaneous examination of systematic relationships among destination image, perceived quality, destination awareness, tourist satisfaction, and tourist loyalty. This approach provides for the integration of cross-sectional data and for the consideration of multiple dependent variables.

This chapter details the research methodology used in the study to empirically test the research hypotheses. The first section begins with a discussion of the research questions, research framework, and ten research hypotheses to be tested. The second section provides the statistical method (Structural Equation Modeling, SEM) that was applied in this study. The third section describes the research design and survey instrument. In particular, the research population, sampling, and data collection method are defined. There is a discussion of how the constructs, as well as the variables of each construct, were selected and operationalized in the study. Therefore, this section provides the variables and scaling used to measure the constructs. The fourth section explains how the measurement scale and the survey instrument are redefined through the pretest processes, which include a discussion of the pretest sample, data collection, and the results. The last section addresses the issues of the reliability and validity of the measurement scales.

3.2 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

There are three research questions provided by this study, as mentioned in Chapter I. The first research question addresses an examination of the influence of destination branding on tourist loyalty. The second research question addresses observation of the relationship between tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty. The final research question attempts to determine whether the existing nature of the relationship between destination branding and tourist satisfaction is moderated by trip types.

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, an extensive review of the existing relevant literature has been performed, and subsequently, a theoretical structural model was developed that incorporates concepts from the field of generic marketing, consumer behavior, and tourism. As presented in Figure 3-1, the constructs in the study include destination image, perceived quality, destination awareness, tourist satisfaction, and tourist loyalty. The tourism and consumer behavior literature has suggested that consumer (tourist)'s image, perceived quality, and awareness about the destination positively influence their satisfaction with the destination, and their satisfaction has a positive relationship with their loyalty. However, the previous studies do not provide an integrative approach to examining the relationships among the mentioned constructs.

An examination of the existing literature provides the justification for the proposed model that describes the interaction of the constructs of destination branding that are likely to directly and indirectly affect tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty.

Consequently, based on the literature review, the theoretical structural relationships among the constructs are developed (Figure 3-1). The logical flow of the interaction of constructs that affect tourist satisfaction and loyalty is described in this structural model. Each arrow at the end of a line describes a progressive linkage between constructs. In addition, each linkage implicitly represents a hypothesis that is empirically testable by estimating the degree of the relationship in the study.

In this structural model, tourist loyalty is considered as the ultimate dependent or endogenous construct. It is thought to be affected indirectly by the three constructs; destination image, perceived quality, and destination awareness. The indirect effects of these three constructs on tourist loyalty are contingent upon tourist satisfaction. The total effect on tourist loyalty is comprised of both direct and indirect effects. Tourist satisfaction is regarded as the mediating endogenous construct, and plays the role of dependent variable in the relationships. This construct also intervenes between the three exogenous constructs and the ultimate endogenous construct. On the other hand, the exogenous constructs of this study include destination image, perceived quality, and destination awareness. These constructs explain tourist satisfaction and loyalty. Conclusively, the structural model in the study was empirically tested in identifying the structural relationships among the exogenous and endogenous constructs.

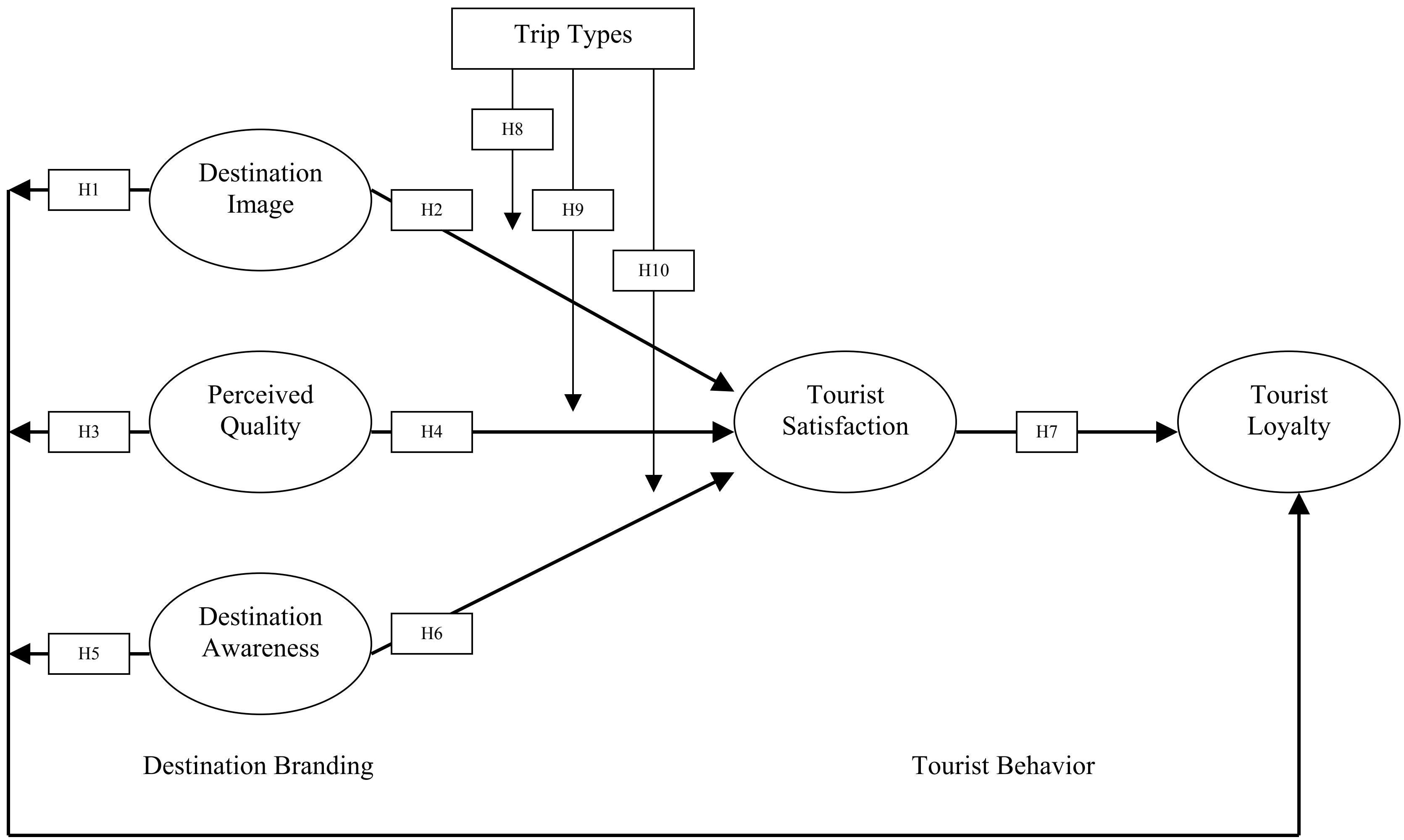


Figure 3-1 Proposed Model of the Study

3.3 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The ten hypotheses were proposed and a structural model was tested to determine how destination branding (destination image, perceived quality, and destination awareness) influences tourist satisfaction, how tourist satisfaction affects tourist loyalty, and whether there is any difference in the relationship among the five constructs in terms of trip types. Therefore, the ten research hypotheses follow:

H1: Destination image as part of destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty.

H2: Destination image as part of destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction.

H3: Perceived quality as part of destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty.

H4: Perceived quality as part of destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction.

H5: Destination awareness as part of destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty.

H6: Destination awareness as part of destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction.

H7: Tourist satisfaction has a positive influence on tourist loyalty.

H8: The relationship between destination image as part of destination branding and tourist satisfaction is moderated by trip types.

H9: The relationship between perceived quality as part of destination branding and tourist satisfaction is moderated by trip types.

H10: The relationship between destination awareness as part of destination branding and tourist satisfaction is moderated by trip types.

3.4 STATISTICAL METHOD

The primary propose of structural equation modeling (SEM) is the explanation of the pattern of inter-related dependence relationships between a set of latent (unobserved) variables and in particular the analysis of causal links between latent variables, each measured by one or more manifest (observed) variables (Hair et al. 1998; Reisinger & Turner, 1999).

In this study to test the hypothesized model, the SEM technique was used since it is best suited for causal models with multiple indicators. This statistical methodology uses theoretically defined variables and examines how matrix equations are able to represent their relationships (Hayduk 1987). In addition, SEM allows simultaneous estimation of a measurement model that relates the items in each scale to the construct they represent, giving factor loadings for each item, and a structural model that relates constructs to one another, providing parameter values.

The properties of items of the constructs in the proposed model and the hypotheses were tested using the LISREL 8.30 structural equation analysis package (Jöreskog & Sörbom 1993) with maximum likelihood (ML) method of estimation (Anderson & Gerbing 1988; Bentler 1983), in combination with the two-stage process recommended by Sethi and King (1994) and Anderson and Gerbing (1988).

As fit indices, there are three types of overall model fit measures are usually used, including Absolute Fit Measures (AFM), Incremental Fit Measures (IFM), and Parsimonious Fit Measures (PFM) (Byrne 1998; Hair et al. 1998; Hu & Bentler 1995). An absolute fit index is used to directly evaluate how well an a priori theoretical model fits the sample data, and an incremental fit index assesses the proportionate fit by comparing a target model with a more restricted, nested baseline model. A parsimonious fit measure is used to diagnose whether model fit has been achieved by over-fitting the data with too many coefficients.

First, the Chi-square test (χ^2), the non-centrality parameter (NCP), the root mean square residual (RSMR), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) are the absolute fit indices which are commonly used to evaluate the model. Regarding the Chi-square test (χ^2), since a large value of χ^2 relative to the degrees of freedom indicates that there is a difference between the observed and estimated covariance matrices with a statistically significant value ($p<.05$), a low Chi-square value (χ^2) should be desired. Thus, little difference between the actual and predicted input matrices is obtained. However, this Chi-square statistic is too sensitive to sample size (Hair et al. 1998).

The non-centrality parameter (NCP) shows the results of another measure of the likelihood-ratio Chi-square statistic that is less affected by or independent of the sample size. The fit measure shows the average squared Euculidean distances between the estimated model and the unrestricted model. Since this fit index cannot be statistically tested, it is recommended to use this measure in making comparisons between the alternative models. The Goodness-of-fit index (GFI) represents the overall degree of fit, indicating a non-statistical measure ranging in value from 0 (poor fit) to 1.0 (perfect fit).

Thus, a higher score indicates a better fit. The above .95 should be desired to indicate a better fitting model.

The standardized root mean square residual, standardized RMR (SRMR) represents the average difference between the predicted and observed variances and covariance in the model. The smaller the standardized RMR, the better the model fit. Therefore, when model fit is perfect, the SRMR is 0. On the other hand, the root mean square residual (RMSR) explains an average of the residuals between observed and estimated input matrices and is calculated by the square root of the mean of the squared residuals. The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) represents a close approximation of fit relative to the degrees of freedom that could be expected if the model is estimated in the population, not just from the sample drawn for the estimation (Steiger 1990). The degree of approximation in the population is very small and the model fits the data well, if 1) the RMSEA is less than .05, 2), the lower and upper boundaries of the confidence interval is less than the recommended values of .05 and .08 respectively, and 3) the probability value related to this test of close fit is greater than .50 (Jöreskog & Sörbom 1996).

Second, the incremental fit measures can be evaluated to compare the proposed model to some baseline model. The common example of group of the fit indices is the adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), the normed fit index (NFI), the relative fit index (RFI), and the comparative fit index (CFI).

The AGFI as an extension of the GFI is adjusted by the ratio of degrees of freedom for the proposed model to the degrees of freedom for the null model. It is recommended that a value greater than or equal to .95 is acceptable for a good fit. The TLI, identified as the non-normed fit index (NNFI), is utilized to evaluate factor analysis and can also be used for comparisons between alternative models by substituting the alternative model for the null model. A value greater than or equal to .95 is acceptable for a good fitting model. The NFI, RFI, CFI are used for a relative comparison of the proposed model to the null model or independent model ranging from 0 (poor fit) to 1.0 (perfect fit). Because a good fitting model obtains a value greater than or equal to .95, larger value indicates a higher level of goodness-of-fit.

Third, the parsimonious fit measures comprise the parsimonious normed fit index (PNFI) and parsimonious goodness-of-fit index (PGFI). The measures are used to evaluate whether model fit has been obtained by "over fitting" the data with too many coefficients. The PNFI accounts for the number of degrees of freedom used to achieve a level of fit. A higher value of the PNFI is better. The PGFI explains the complexity of the hypothesized model in the assessment of the overall fit. Basically, a PGFI larger than .50 is acceptable for a good model fit (Byrne 1998).

Finally, Hoelter's Critical N (CN) is used to evaluate the adequacy of model fit. Especially, the purpose of the CN is to estimate a sample size that would be sufficient to yield an adequate model fit for a Chi-square test. Hoelter (1983) proposes that a CN in excess of 200 is indicative of a model that adequately represents the sample data. Table 3-1 shows types of indices used in SEM. This study utilized all indices presented in Table 3-1. The following section discusses the nature and characteristics of measurement and structural models as part of SEM.

Table 3-1. Fit Indices of the Measure Model

Fit Index	Cutoff Value
Goodness-of-fit Index (GFI)	$\geq .95$
Adjusted Goodness-of-fit Index (AGFI)	$\geq .95$
Parsimony Goodness-of-fit Index (PGFI)	$\geq .50$
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	$\geq .90$
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)	$\geq .95$
Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	$\geq .50$
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	$\geq .95$
Increment Fit Index (IFI)	$\geq .95$
Relative Fit Index (RFI)	$\geq .95$
Root Mean Square Residual (RMR)	$\leq .05$
Standardized Mean Square Residual (SRMR)	$\leq .05$
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	$\leq .05$

3.4.1 Measurement Model

A confirmatory measurement model that specifies the posited relationships of the observed variables to the underlying constructs, with the construct allowed to intercorrelate freely was tested as recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), Jöreskog (1993), and Sethi and King (1994). They recommend the use of a measurement model to separate measurement issues from model structure issues. The use of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) ensures the uni-dimensionality of the scales measuring each construct in the model and avoids the interaction of the measurement and structural models that can affect the parameters associated with the hypothesized relationships between the constructs in the model. Thus, before testing the overall measurement model, measurement uni-dimensionality of each construct is assessed individually (Sethi & King 1994). Constructs with unacceptable fits are re-specified by deleting the indicators that have not worked out as planned to preserve the potential to have uni-dimensional measurement (Anderson & Gerbing 1988).

After evaluating the uni-dimensionality of each construct individually, a measurement model for each pair of constructs is estimated, combining them two by two (Jöreskog 1993). First, each construct's fit is measured. After confirming that the fit of each construct is acceptable, the fit of two constructs (a pair) is measured. All constructs are paired with each other.

3.4.2 Structural Model

According to Hoyle (1995), a structural model is the hypothetical model that prescribes relationships among latent constructs and observed variables that are not indicators of latent constructs. Basically, the model is recognized as the component of a general model that relates the constructs with other constructs by providing path coefficients (parameter values) for each of the research hypotheses. Especially, each estimated path coefficient can be tested for its respective statistical significance for the hypotheses' relationships, while containing standard errors and calculated *t*-values (Bollen 1989; Byrne 1998; Hair et al. 1998).

In the structural model, a specific structure between latent endogenous and exogenous constructs must be hypothesized, and the measurement model for latent endogenous and exogenous constructs should be determined (Hair et al. 1998). Generally, maximum likelihood (ML) or generalized least squares (GLS) are used for the model estimation because these methods allow for the analysis of models involving latent constructs and non-zero error covariance across structural equations (Kline 1998; Mueller 1996).

Also, the standardized solution, where the estimated coefficients all have equal variances and a maximum value of 1.0, should be tested (Hair et al. 1998). For the measure of the entire structural equation, an overall coefficient of the determinant (R^2) must be calculated for the overall explanation of the variance. Consequently, the structural model provides a meaningful and parsimonious explanation for observed relationships within a set of measured variables (MacCallum 1995). The model enables explanations of direct, indirect, and total structural effects of the exogenous latent constructs on the endogenous constructs.

3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.5.1 Study Population

A population can be defined as any complete group of entities such as people, organizations, institutions, or the like that share some common set of characteristics in agreement with the purpose of the study under investigation and about which researchers want to be able to draw conclusions and plan to generalize (Zikmund, 1997). Because the objective of the study is to investigate the relationships among destination branding, tourist satisfaction, and tourist loyalty, the population of the study is leisure tourists. A leisure tourist is defined as a traveler who is at least 18 years or older and took at least one trip to either a domestic or an international destination for at least two nights away from home.

3.5.2 Sampling

Sampling is the process of selective observation using a small number of units of a larger population to draw conclusions about the whole population, while a sampling frame is the actual list or quasi-list of elements (sampling units) from which a probability sample may be selected (Zikmund 1997).

The sample of this study includes residents of the state of Virginia in the United States. First, a stratified sampling method was used to determine the number of respondents required from each county and city of Virginia. Then, a random sampling was utilized to select the assigned number of respondents from each county and city of Virginia. The sample (mailing list) was obtained from the ReferenceUSA database (www.referenceusa.com), which provides residential information collected from telephone directories and is available at large public libraries. Each listing appears in the database exactly as it appears in the phone book, and unlisted phone numbers are not included.

3.5.3 Sample Size

Generally, structural equation modeling (SEM) is very much a large sample technique because both the types of estimation methods (e.g., maximum likelihood) and tests of model (Chi-square test) are based on the assumption of a large sample. Several researchers have different guidelines on the definition of “large” (Anderson & Gerbing 1984).

Even though there is no correct sample size in the absolute rule, the generally recommended sample size ranges from 100 to 200 to ensure the appropriate use of maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) (Dillon et al. 1987). And, it is commonly recommended that models incorporating latent variables require at least a sample size of 100 observations. Sample sizes of 200 observations or greater are preferred they increase the accuracy of parameter estimates (Marsh et al. 1998). In another approach, it has been suggested that the ratio of subjects to estimated parameters be between 5:1 and 10:1 (Hair et al. 1998; Hatcher 1994).

There are some recommendations in the literature regarding the minimum sample size required for appropriate statistical inferences. Small samples require more careful considerations of the conditions for valid statistical power and inference. With regards to statistical power, hypothesis testing strategy for the SEM models entails accepting the null hypothesis for the best model fit. It would be easy to make conclusions about model fit when samples are small and tested models are likely to fit. On the other hand, large sample sizes are also likely to be problematic because they are likely to result in poor goodness-of-fit indices. Thus, it would be difficult to draw conclusions about model fit.

The appropriate sample size may not have been obvious until this point. In accordance with the sample size recommended by previous studies, minimum of 100 observations is minimally acceptable, and a more appropriate level of 200 observations is preferred. Consequently, the model and number of fit indices such as GFI, AGFI, NNF, CFI, and CN are relatively and consistently stable across the MLE method at a sample size of 250 or greater when the latent constructs are independent. Therefore, the targeted usable sample size for this study was 300 in order to test proposed hypotheses under investigation.

The response rate of a mail survey tends to be low thereby leading to the potential problem of generalizing the results. According to Smith (1995), 30% are common for the general population but rates can be as low as 10%, depending upon study design and questionnaire content. Recent surveys of Virginia residents received 16% (Han 2005) and 24% response rate (Gursoy 2001). This research took a conservative approach and assumed a response rate of 15%. Based on the conservative response rate of 15%, a total of 2000 people were surveyed to attain the target sample size.

3.5.4 Data Collection

A self-administered survey method was utilized in this study. Once the final measurement scales and the survey questionnaires were developed, the survey package that included a cover letter and survey questionnaires was sent to the selected residents in Virginia. A pilot test was conducted in order to test and improve measurement scales and the survey questionnaire.

3.6 MEASUREMENT SCALES AND INSTRUMENTS

The measurement scales in structural equation modeling (SEM) represent the scale items for each construct to be measured. Each construct in the proposed model (Figure 3.1) is designated as either an endogenous or an exogenous construct. While an exogenous construct is one that does not receive a directional influence from any other construct in the model, an endogenous construct is one that receives a directional influence from some other constructs in the model. That is, an exogenous construct exerts directional influences on one or more endogenous constructs, while an endogenous construct is hypothesized to be affected by another construct in the model (MacCallum 1995).

The theoretical model of this study is represented by three exogenous constructs (destination image, perceived quality, and destination awareness), one mediate endogenous construct (tourist satisfaction), and one ultimate endogenous construct (tourist loyalty). For most of the constructs that are used in this study, there are no standard measurement scales. Scales that were utilized in other areas such as marketing and consumer behavior to assess similar constructs are applied to measure the constructs proposed in this study. Furthermore, the measurement scales for the study are developed based on relevant theories, previous empirical studies, and observations and experiences of the given phenomena. The next section details the measurement scales and the items used to measure all the constructs in this study.

3.6.1. Exogenous Constructs

3.6.1.1 Destination Image

In the tourism marketing literature, various researchers have pointed out that destination image is a concept widely used in the empirical context, and have proposed a number of scales to determine the different attributes relevant to measuring destination image (Baloglu & Brinberg 1997; Baloglu & McCleary 1999a,b; Calantone et al. 1989;

Chaudhary 2000; Crompton 1979; Echtner & Ritchie 1993; Fakeye & Crompton 1991; Gartner & Shen 1992; Gartner 1993; Hu & Ritchie 1993; Phelps 1986; Walmsley & Jenkins 1993). However, most studies revealed a lack of homogeneity with respect to the attributes that defined an individual's perceptions, and failed to establish the validity and reliability of the scales. According to Beerli and Martin (2004a,b), only Echtner and Ritchie (1993) and Baloglu and McCleary (1999a,b) determined the reliability of the scales used.

Echtner & Ritchie (1993) developed a conceptual framework for destination images providing a list of thirty-five destination attributes. They were measured by means of scales, and suggested that the destination image could be structured using three continuums, including attribute-holistic, functional-psychological, and common-unique. Based on their functional-psychological grid, O'leary and Deegan (2005) developed the list of attributes to measure Ireland's image as a tourism destination in France.

The most recent studies (Baloglu & Brinberg 1997; Baloglu & McCleary 1999a,b; Beerli & Martin 2004a,b; Ekinci, Hosany, & Uysal 2005; Sonmez & Sirakaya 2002) tend to consider image as a concept formed by the consumer's reasoned and emotional interpretation as the consequence of two closely interrelated components, including cognitive and affective image. Cognitive image refers to the individual's own knowledge and beliefs, while affective image refers to the individual's feelings towards the objects.

Based on these studies of destination image (Baloglu & Brinberg 1997; Baloglu & McCleary 1999a,b; Beerli & Martin 2004a,b; Echtner & Ritchie 1993; Ekinci, Hosany, & Uysal 2005; O'Leary and Deegan 2005; Sonmez & Sirakaya 2002), this study adapted some items of cognitive image and affective image, and one variable of overall image.

The items of cognitive and affective image were measured on a 5-point Likert -type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). Table 3-2 lists the items that were used to measure the constructs of destination image.

Table 3-2 Measurement of Destination Image

1. The destination is very peaceful.
2. The destination is very safe.
3. The destination has beautiful scenery.
4. The destination has high standards of cleanliness.
5. The destination has a lot of friendly people.
6. The destination is family-oriented.
7. The destination has unique culture and history.
8. The destination has good climate/weather.
9. The destination has a wide variety of food.
10. The destination has good infrastructure.
11. The destination has good nightlife and entertainment.
12. The destination is very pleasant.
13. The destination is very exciting.
14. The destination is relaxing.
15. The destination is arousing.

Note: 1= Strongly disagree, 5= Strongly agree (1-15)

3.6.1.2 Perceived Quality

Perceived quality has been shown to be an antecedent of satisfaction (Baker & Crompton 2000; Fornell et al. 1996; Oliver 1999; Oh 1999, 2000; Cronin et al. 2000; Gallarza & Saura 2005; McDougall and Levesque 2000, Petrick 2004; Petrick et al. 2001; Petrick and Backmann 2002) and to be a good predictor of repurchase intentions (Baker

& Crompton 2000; Bigne et al. 2000; Crompton & Love 1995; Ekinci & Sirakaya 2004; Getz et al. 2001; Heung & Cheng 2000; Kozak & Remington 2000; Petrick 2004).

One of the most extensively used measures of service quality is SERVQUAL (Cronin & Taylor 1992, Oh 1999), which was developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) and conceptualized service quality and their assessments of service performance.

However, many researchers have criticized its application. Thus, Cronin and Taylor (1992) proposed that service quality should be conceptualized and measured as an attitude. They further suggested that the SERVQUALwas a better measure of service quality if used as performance-based measure, without a comparison of expectation. They examined the performance-only model and found that the performance-only measures were superior to contrast measures utilizing expectations.

Based on Cronin and Taylor (1992), Brady and Cronin (2001) provided a conceptual model of service quality. They argued that customers formed service quality perceptions on the basis of their evaluations of three primary dimensions: interaction quality, service quality, and outcome quality. Each primary dimension has three secondary dimensions.

Recent studies of tourism marketing have found that performance-only measures are superior to contrast measures utilizing expectations. Thus, they suggested that alternative measures of service quality were more appropriate than utilizing SERVQUAL (Baker & Crompton 2000; Hartline & Fornell 1996; Oh 1999, 2000; Petrick 2002, 2004; Petrick et al. 2001; Petrick & Backmann 2002). Petrick (2002, 2004) proposed SERV-PERVAL scale measures of quality based on the Zeithmahl (1988) definition stating that quality is a consumer's judgment about a product's or service's overall excellence or superiority. He explained that performance-only measures have been found to be superior to expectation disconfirmation measures. Thus, this study provided the six items of perceived quality based on Petrick's SERV-PERVAL scale. As presented in Table 3-3, the respondents were asked to measure the perceived quality of the destination. The measurement of perceived quality consists of 6 items measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).

Table 3-3 Measurement of Perceived Quality

1. The quality of this destination is outstanding.
2. The quality of this destination is very reliable.
3. The quality of this destination is very dependable.
4. The quality of this destination is very consistent.
5. The quality of this destination is of a high standard.
6. The quality of this destination is very favorable.

Note: 1= Strongly disagree, 5= Strongly agree

3.6.1.3 Destination Awareness

In order to measure destination awareness, this study uses a measurement of brand awareness because the concept of destination awareness is transferred from that of brand awareness in this study. Aaker (1991) divided brand awareness into three components, including brand recognition, brand recall, and top-of-mind awareness. Furthermore, Keller (1993) thought that brand awareness consisted of brand recognition (familiarity) and brand recall.

Brand recognition relates to consumers' ability to confirm prior exposures to the brand when given the brand as a cue. In other words, brand recognition requires that consumers correctly discriminate the brand as having been seen or heard previously. Brand recall is defined as consumers' ability to retrieve the brand when given the product category, the needs fulfilled by the category, or some other type of probe as a cue. In other words, brand recall requires that consumers correctly generate the brand from memory.

Destination awareness was measured by destination recognition (familiarity) and destination recall in this study. Familiarity (recognition) with destination has been mostly measured by a single indicator, and is often referred to as previous trip experience (Dann 1996; Fridgen 1997; Chon 1991; Hu & Ritchie 1993; Milman & Pizam 1995; Woodside & Ronkainen 1980). However, this study provided four items to measure destination recognition based on Oh's (2000) study, which explained the effect of brand awareness and price on customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions. He reported that the reliability (Cronbach's α=.97) of the scale was reasonably high. Furthermore, this study proposed three items to measure destination recall based on Kim and Kim (2004)'s and Yoo et al.'s (2000) study. The measurement of destination awareness consisted of 7 items measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree) (Table 3-4).

Table 3-4 Measurement of Destination Awareness

1. I am very familiar with the destination.
2. I have heard a great deal about this destination.
3. This destination is very visible.
4. This destination is very famous.
5. When I decide to travel, this destination comes to my mind first.
6. This destination is quickly recalled among other competing destinations.
7. Some characteristics of this destination come to my mind quickly

Note: 1= Strongly disagree, 5= Strongly agree

3.6.2 Mediating Endogenous Construct

3.6.2.1 Tourist Satisfaction

Tourist satisfaction is important to successful destination marketing because it influences the choice of destination, the consumption of products and services, and the decision to return (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Oppermann 2000; Yoon & Uysal 2005). An assessment of tourist satisfaction has been attempted using various perspectives and theories. Most of the studies conducted to evaluate consumer satisfaction have utilized models of expectancy-disconfirmation (Barsky 1992; Barsky & Labagh 1992; Chon 1989; Francken & Van Raaij 1981; Huh 2002; Huh & Uysal 2003; Oliver 1980; Pizam & Milman 1993), equity (Fisk & Coney 1982; Fisk & Young 1985; Heskett, Sasser, & Schlesinger 1997; Oliver & DeSarbo 1988; Oliver & Swan 1989; Swan et al 1985), norm (Cadotte, Woodruff, & Jenkins 1987; Latour & Peat 1979), and perceived overall performance (Pizam, Neuman, & Reichel 1978; Tse & Wilton 1988).

Therefore, this study utilized expectancy-disconfirmation theory, equity theory, norm theory, and perceived overall performance in order to measure tourist satisfaction.

Especially, based on Knutson et al. (2003), Kozak and Rimmington (2000), and Yoon and Uysal (2005), it provided three items. The variables were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree) (Table 3-5).

Table 3-5 Measurement of Tourist Satisfaction

1. The destination is much better than what I expected.
2. The destination provides much more benefits than costs.
3. The destination is the best among other competing destinations.

Note: 1= Strongly disagree, 5= Strongly agree

3.6.3 Ultimate Endogenous Construct

3.6.3.1 Destination Loyalty

Loyalty is one of the critical indicators used to measure the success of a marketing strategy (Flavian, Martinez, & Polo 2001; Oppermann 2000; Yoon & Uysal 2005). With such importance, marketers and researchers have generally shared a fundamental understanding of what loyalty means and how it is created. For example, Jacoby and Chestnut (1978) suggested a great divergence in opinion of what constitutes brand loyalty, how it should be measured, or perhaps simply in some cases in the availability of data (Oppermann 2000). They distinguished three approaches to brand loyalty, including a behavioral approach, an attitudinal approach, and a composite approach. Zeithaml (1996) used behavioral intentions in order to measure loyalty. His measurement of loyalty was divided into two domains: loyalty subscales and willingness to pay more subscale.

Based on Jacoby and Chestnut (1978) and Zeithaml (1996), many researchers have studied the concept of consumer loyalty in the last two decades in the area of tourism and leisure/recreation activities. (Backmann & Crompton 1999a, 1999b; Baloglu 2001; Mazanec 2000; Morais et al. 2004; Oppermann 2000; Pritchard & Howard 1997; Ryan 1995; Selin et al. 1988, Yoon & Uysal 2005). Also, on the basis of Jacoby and Chestnut (1978) and Zeithaml (1996), this study provided the 4 items in order to measure tourist loyalty. These 4 items were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree) (Table 3-6).

Table 3-6 Measurement of Tourist Loyalty

1. I will visit the destination again in the future.
2. I recommend the destination to other people who seek advice.
3. I encourage my friends/relatives to visit the destination.
4. I am willing to pay a higher price than other destinations.

Note: 1= Strongly disagree, 5= Strongly agree

3.7 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Reliability deals with how consistently similar measures produces similar results (Rosenthal & Rosnow 1984). Reliability has two dimensions, including repeatability and internal consistency (Zigmund 1995). The dimension of internal consistency refers to the ability of a scale item to correlate with other items of the sample scale that are intended to measure the same construct. The adequacy of the individual items and the composites is assessed by measures of reliability and validity. The reliability of the measurement instrument was assessed by Cronbach's α. A Cronbach's α, and a composite reliability estimate of .70 or higher indicated that the measurement scale that is used to measure a construct is moderately reliable. If the composite reliability is not high enough to be accepted, the scale is revised by deleting items as a result of the reliability analysis. The composite reliability, as calculated with LISREL estimates, is analogous to coefficient alpha and is calculated by the formula by Fornell and Larcker (1981).

Validity refers to how well the measurement captures what it is designed to measure (Rosenthal & Rosnow 1984). There are several different types of validity about which to be concerned, including face (construct validity), criterion validity, and construct validity (Bollen 1989; Zigmund 1995).

Face validity is the agreement among professionals that the scale is measuring what it is supposed to measure). Face validity of the measurement was assessed by allowing five professional to examine it and provide feedback for revision. Afterwards, the survey instrument was given to graduate students majoring in hospitality and tourism management to solicit feedback, as well as to check for readability of the questions and the estimated time to complete the survey questionnaire. In addition, a formal pretest was conducted on a convenience sample.

Criterion validity is the degree of correspondence between a measure and a criterion variable, usually measured by their correlation. It has two types of validity, including predictive validity and concurrent validity. Concurrent validity was assessed by examining the Pearson relationship and multiple regression between the measurement scale and criterion variable.

Construct validity is the ability of a measure to confirm a network of related hypotheses generated from a theory based on the constructs. It has two types of validity, including convergent validity and discriminant validity. Convergent validity was assessed from the measurement model by deleting each indicator's estimated pattern coefficient on its posited underlying construct factor and determining if a Chi-square difference test between a model with and without the estimated parameter is significant (greater than twice its standard error, Anderson & Gerbing 1988). On the other hand, discriminant validity was assessed for every possible pair of constructs by constraining the estimated correlation parameter between them to .0 and then performing a Chi-square difference test on the values obtained for the constrained and unconstrained model (Anderson & Gerbing 1988). A significantly lower Chi-square value for the model in which the trait correlations are not constrained to unity indicates that the traits are not perfectly correlated and that discriminant validity is achieved.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has been devoted to presenting the research methodology used in this study. First, the research questions and research framework were proposed. Second, the statistical method (Structural Equation Modeling, SEM) employed for the study was explained. Third, the research design and survey instrument were specified, including the research population, sampling, and data collection method. Fourth, the measurement scales and constructs were explained. Lastly, the issues of the reliability and validity of the measurement scales were discussed.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis and hypothesis testing. In the first section of this chapter, the pretest of the scale items used in the study is presented, including a description of the samples. The second section provides a description of the survey methods employed in this study and the demographic profiles of the survey respondents. The third section of the chapter presents the results of the confirmatory factor analysis conducted to confirm the factor structure of the constructs. The fourth section examines and reports the reliability and validity of the measurement. Then, the results of the hypothesis tests applied in Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) are presented and interpreted.

4.2 PRETEST

As mentioned in Chapter III, before the final survey instrument could be prepared, it was necessary to conduct a pretest of scale items. The purpose of the pretest was to validate the scale items to be used in the study that were either developed specifically for this study or modified from previous studies.

The development of the measurement scales for this study followed the procedures recommended by Churchill (1979) and DeVellis (1991) for developing standardized survey instruments. The initial task in developing a scale is to devise an item pool (Baloglu & McCleary 1999a,b; Kim & Kim, 2004; Petrick 2002, 2004; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Zeithaml, 1996). A total of 38 items were used to measure destination branding (15 items to measure destination image, 15 items to measure perceived quality, and 8 items to measure destination awareness), 8 items for assessing tourist satisfaction, and 10 items for measuring tourist loyalty.

Three professors first assessed the content adequacy of the items. The professors were asked to provide comments on content and understandability. They were then asked to edit and improve the items to enhance their clarity, readability, and content adequacy. They were also asked to identify any of the scale items that were redundant with other scale items, and to offer suggestions for improving the proposed scale. Afterwards, the measurement items were distributed to 10 graduate students in the department of Hospitality and Tourism Management at Virginia Tech. They were also asked to comment on content and provide additional questions that might improve the scale and its understandability, and asked to identify any of the scale items that were redundant with other scale items. The professors and some students commented that several scale items were redundant and overlapped. In order to remove the problems, 21 items from the initial list of 56 items were deleted. Thus, the total number of items was decreased to 35. Then, the newly developed and modified scale items that had been drawn from previous studies were tested empirically. This step in the pretest is discussed in detail in this section of the chapter.

4.2.1 Pretest Survey Method

The pretest survey was distributed by on-line survey method. The on-line survey method allowed the respondents to take the survey on their computers after they accessed the particular web address (https://survey.vt.edu/survey/entry.jsp?id=1133818665994).

4.2.2 Pretest Sample

A convenient sample was used to conduct the pretest. The sample consisted of graduate students and undergraduate students of Virginia Tech. A total of 95 responses were received. The final pretest sample size was 95. Appendix A presents the demographic and travel behavior of the pretest sample.

The demographic characteristics and travel behavior characteristics of the respondents are shown in Appendix A. In the demographic characteristics of tourists, the gender distribution of the respondents was quite even, with 48.8% female respondents and 51.6% male respondents. The dominant age group of the respondents was 18 to 25 years (79.6%), followed by 26 to 35 years (16.1%), and 36 to 45 years (4.3%). In terms of level of education, 31.6% of the respondents were freshman and 23.1% of the respondents were continuing the post- graduate education. With regard to respondents' annual household income, 28.3% of respondents had an annual household income of $110,000 or above. Also, 28.3% of the respondents had an annual household income of $30,000 or less.

In the category of the length of stay, 46.8% of the respondents stayed for five to seven days, followed by for two to four days (34.0%), for eight to ten days (10.5%) and for eleven days or more (8.5%). Over 88.4% of the respondents traveled with a partner, friends, and family members, whereas only 10.5% of respondents traveled alone or with organized groups. The largest group of the respondents (38.9%) traveled to natural destinations, followed by entertainment destination (25.3%), to cultural/heritage destinations (17.9%), and to recreational destination (15.8%).

4.2.3 Results from the Pretest

The results of the pretest provided the necessary validation in order to finalize the scale items to be used in the final survey. This section of Chapter IV will provide a discussion of which items were chosen and how they were determined to be valid.

One of the purposes of a pretest is to establish a unidimensional scale for the measurement of a construct. Unidimensionality refers to the existence of a single construct explaining a set of indicators. To detect scale dimensionality, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with a principal component method was conducted for each construct and sub-construct. A separate principal component analysis was conducted for each sub-construct because the items of each sub-construct were pre-determined. First of all, to determine the appropriateness of factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett’s test of sphericity were examined. A value of .60 or above from the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy test indicates that the data are adequate for EFA and that a significant Bartlett’s test of sphericity is required

(Tabachnick & Fidel, 1989). In order to make sure that each factor identified by EFA has only one dimension and that each attribute loads on only one factor, attributes that had factor loadings of lower than .40 and attributes loading on more than one factor with a loading score of equal to or greater than .40 on each factor were eliminated from the analysis (Chen & Hsu 2001; Gursoy 2001; Kim 2002).

4.2.3.1 Destination Image

The pretest of the destination image construct included fifteen scale items derived and modified from previous research as noted in Chapter III. In order to determine the scale items, a principal component factor analysis was performed. To determine the appropriateness of factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy and the Bartlett's test of sphericity were examined. The result of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy test indicated an acceptable level (.792); a value of .60 or above is required for a good factor (Tabachnick & Fidel 1989; Hair et al. 1998). The Bartlett's test of sphericity (385.635) was also found to be significant at a level of .000 (Appendix A).

The principal component factor analysis indicated that there were two factors, which were cognitive destination image and affective destination image. The first factor (cognitive destination image) represented 45.77% of the explained variance of the scale, and the second factor (affective destination image) explained 18.83% of the variance.

Cognitive destination image (factor I) was comprised of five items. Those items were: "this destination is very peaceful," "this destination is very safe," "this destination has high standards of cleanliness," "this destination has a lot of friendly people," and “this destination is family-oriented” (factor loadings of .770, .863, .873, .520, and .753 respectively). The reliability of the five items measuring the cognitive destination image factor was determined to be .84, which was more than reliable, because .60 is the minimum value for accepting the reliability test (Hair et al. 199867).

Affective destination image (factor II) was comprised of four items. Those items were: “this destination is very pleasant,” “this destination is very exiting,” “this destination is relaxing,” and “this destination is arousing” (factor loadings of .611, .848, .550, and .869 respectively). The reliability of the four items measuring the affective destination image factor was determined to be .78, which was more than reliable, because .60 is the minimum value for accepting the reliability test (Hair et al. 1998).

4.2.3.2 Perceived Quality

The pretest of the perceived quality in analysis construct included six potential scale items derived and modified from previous studies as noted in Chapter III. Appropriateness of factor analysis was determined by investigating the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy and the Bartlett’s test of sphericity. Both tests indicated that it was appropriate to perform a factor analysis (Appendix A).

The principal component factor analysis indicated that there was only one factor, which represented 76.30% of the explained variance of the scale. That factor was comprised of six items with factor loadings greater than .40. Those items were: “the quality of this destination is outstanding,” “the quality of this destination is very reliable,” “the quality of this destination is very dependable,” “the quality of this destination is very consistent,” “the quality of this destination is of high standard,” and “the quality of this destination is very favorable" (factor loadings of .863, .888, .862, .877, .893, and .857 respectively).

4.2.3.3 Destination Awareness

The pretest of destination awareness construct included seven scale items derived and modified from previous research as noted in Chapter III. The result of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy test indicated an acceptable level (.790); a value of .60 or above is required for a good factor (Tabachnick & Fidel 1989; Hair et al. 1998). The Bartlett's test of sphericity (385.558) was also found to be significant at a level of .000 (Appendix A).

The principal component factor analysis indicated that there were two factors, which were destination recognition and destination familiarity. The first factor (destination recognition) represented 45.18% of the explained variance of the scale, and the second factor (destination familiarity) explained 19.18% of the variance.

Destination recognition (factor I) was comprised of three items. Those items were: "I have heard a great deal about this destination," "this destination is very visible," and "this destination is very famous" (factor loadings of .754, .855, and .917 respectively). The reliability of the five items measuring the cognitive destination image factor was determined to be .84, which was more than reliable, because .60 is the minimum value for accepting the reliability test (Hair et al. 1998).

Destination familiarity (factor II) was comprised of four items. Those items were: "I am familiar with this destination," "when I decide to travel, this destination comes to my mind first," "this destination is quickly recalled among other competing destinations," and “some characteristics of this destination come to my mind quickly” (factor loadings of .781, .798, .679, and .581 respectively). The reliability of the four items measuring the affective destination image factor was determined to be .78, which was more than reliable, because .60 is the minimum value for accepting the reliability test (Hair et al. 1998).

4.2.3.4 Tourist Satisfaction

The pretest of the tourist satisfaction in analysis construct included three potential scale items derived and modified from previous studies as noted in Chapter III. Appropriateness of factor analysis was determined by investigating the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy and the Bartlett’s test of sphericity. Both tests indicated that it was appropriate to perform a factor analysis (Appendix A).

The principal component factor analysis indicated that there was only one factor, which represented 75.67% of the explained variance of the scale. That factor was comprised of three items with factor loadings greater than .40. Those items were: “this destination is much better than what I expected,” “this destination provides much more benefits than costs,” and “this destination is the best among other competing destinations” (factor loadings of .830, .896, and .882 respectively).

4.2.3.5 Tourist Loyalty

The pretest of tourist loyalty in analysis construct included four potential scale items derived and modified from previous studies as noted in Chapter III. Appropriateness of factor analysis was determined by investigating the Kaiser-Meyer-

Olkin measure of sampling adequacy and the Bartlett's test of sphericity. Both tests indicated that it was appropriate to perform a factor analysis (Appendix A).

The principal component factor analysis indicated that there was only one factor, which represented 72.05% of the explained variance of the scale. That factor was comprised of four items with factor loadings greater than .40. Those items were: "I will visit this destination again in the future," "I recommend this destination to other people who seek advice," "I encourage my friends/relatives to visit this destination," and "I am willing to pay a higher price than other destinations" (factor loadings of .818, .908, .913, and .745 respectively).

4.2.3.6 Summary of Pretest

Table 4-1 presents a summary of the pretest results of this study's constructs with their associated variances and Cronbach's alpha.

Table 4-1 Pretest Results of the Constructs

Constructs	Variance explained	Cronbach's alpha
Destination Image	64.593	
Cognitive Destination Image	45.765	.835
Affective Destination Image	18.828	.777
Perceived Quality	76.304	.938
Destination Awareness	64.363	
Destination Recognition	45.184	.836
Destination Familiarity	19.178	.784
Tourist Satisfaction	75.669	.837
Tourists Loyalty	72.054	.837

Based on the results of the pretest for destination image and destination awareness, destination image and destination awareness were determined to have two dimensions. The first dimension of destination image was called cognitive destination image, and the second dimension of destination image was called affective destination image. The first dimension of destination awareness was destination recognition, and the second dimension was destination familiarity. Due to the two-factor structure of destination image and destination awareness, the proposed model (Figure 3-1) was modified. Figure 4-1 presents the proposed theoretical model that was tested.

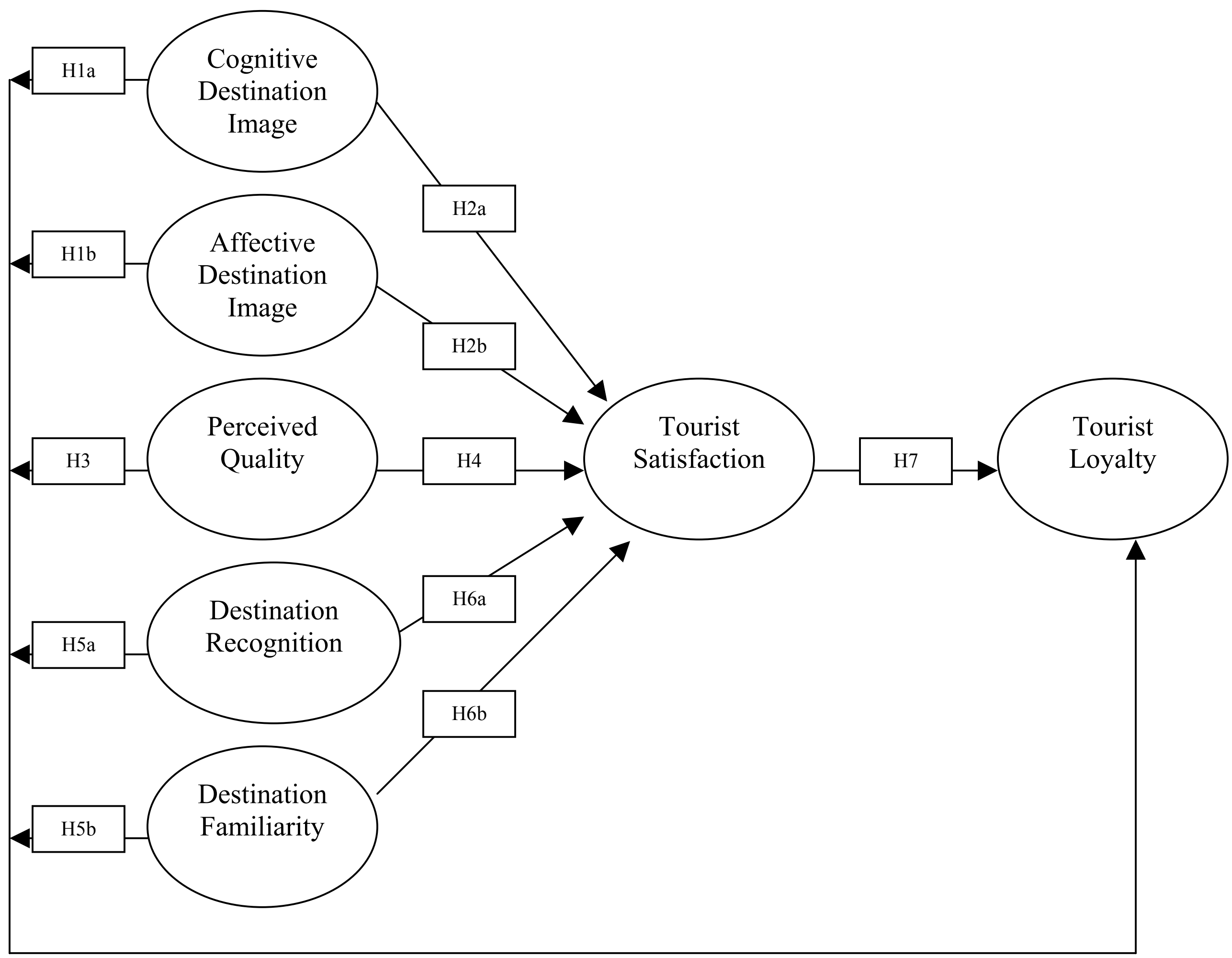


Figure 4-1 Modified Proposed Model

4.3 FINAL SURVEY

This section of the chapter discusses the final survey method, the sample, the response rate, the demographic characteristic and the information about the most recent leisure trip in the final sample.

4.3.1 Survey Method

A self-administered survey questionnaire, which was finalized from the pretest, was used to collect data. The questionnaire was delivered via the U.S. Postal Service to a stratified random sample during the month of February and March 2006. The mailed package included a cover letter that was addressed to the respondent, a self-addressed and pre-paid returning envelope, and the questionnaire (Appendix B). Three weeks after the survey was mailed, a reminder postcard was sent to respondents.

4.3.2 Sample

The sample population consisted of residents of Virginia. A survey questionnaire with a cover letter was mailed to 2,000 residents of Virginia. In order to make sure that the sample represented a population distribution in Virginia, a stratified sampling method was utilized. First, the total population of Virginia and population of counties and cities in Virginia were obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau (2002). Then, the number of respondents needed from each county and city to obtain a total sample of 2,000 was calculated. Once the number of respondents was identified, a random sampling was utilized to select the assigned number of respondents from each county and city of Virginia. (Appendix D) The sample (mailing list) for this study was obtained from the ReferenceUSA database (www.referenceusa.com), which provides residential information collected from telephone directories and is available at large public libraries.

As reported in Table 4-2, because a total of 309 surveys were returned, the overall response rate was 15.6%. Five of the returned questionnaires were eliminated as the data were being coded because they were returned blank or were only partially completed. After eliminating the unusable responses, 304 responses were coded and used for data analysis.

Table 4-2 Survey Response Rate

	Number	Percent (%)
Total target population	2,000	100
Undeliverable	14	0.7
Total survey population	1,986	100
Total responses	309	15.6
First wave of survey	216	60.9
Second wave of survey	93	39.1
Unusable samples	5	0.3
Total usable sample	304	15.3

4.3.3 Profile of Respondents

4.3.3.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The demographic characteristics of sex, age, marital status, education, total household income, and ethnic group were included in this chapter in order to provide a descriptive profile of the respondents (Table 4-3).

Of the 303 respondents who provided gender information, 180 (59.4%) were male, whereas 123 (40.6%) were female respondents. The largest age group of the respondents was 36 to 45 years (22.3%), followed by 26 to 35 years (20.9%), 46 to 55 years (20.6%), 56 to 65 years (17.8%), 66 years or older (10.1%), and 18 to 25 years (8.4%). The dominant marital status group of the respondents was married group (76.0%) In terms of level of education, 48.3% of the respondents had college or university degrees, and 40.1% of the respondents had post- graduate education. With regard to respondents' annual household income, 27.1% of respondents had an annual household income of $110,000 or more, whereas, only 8% of the respondents had an annual household income of $30,000 or less. In terms of ethnic groups, the vast majority of the respondents were Caucasian (79.2%), followed by Asian (10.6%), African –American (5.3%), Hispanic (2.6%), and Native American (.7%).

Table 4-3 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variables	Frequency (N=304)	Percent (%)
Sex (n=303)		
Female	123	40.6
Male	180	59.4
Age (n=287)		
18-25	24	8.4
26-35	60	20.9
36-45	64	22.3
46-55	59	20.6
56-65	51	17.8
66 or older	29	10.1
Marital Status (n=301)		
Single	50	16.6
Married	229	76.0
Widowed	8	2.7
Divorced	10	3.3
Separated	4	1.3
Education (n=302)		
High school	35	11.6
College/university	146	48.3
Graduate school	121	40.1
Total Household Income (USD) (n=288)		
$30,000 or less	23	8.0
$30,001-50,000	45	15.6
$50,001-70,000	44	15.3
$70,001-90,000	56	19.4
$90,001-110,000	42	14.6
$110,001 or more	78	27.1
Ethnic Groups (n=303)		
Caucasian	240	79.2
African-American	16	5.3
Hispanic	8	2.6
Asian	32	10.6
Native American	2	.7
Others	5	1.7

4.3.3.2 Characteristics of the Most Recent Leisure Trip of the Respondents

The characteristics of the most recent leisure trip consisted of travel experience, domestic/international trips, trip types, length of trips, travel parties, and source of information (Table 4-4).

Most respondents (99%) traveled to any destination, more than two nights away from home, for the purpose of leisure in the past 18 months. 80.4% of the respondents traveled abroad, while 19.6% of them traveled within the U. S. In terms of trip types, the vast majority of the respondents had resort trips (35.6%), city trips (21.4%), outdoor trips (14.9%), cultural/heritage trips (12.9%). theme park trips (11.5%), and others (3.7%). In the category of the length of trip, 38.7% of the respondents stayed for 2 to 4 days, followed by 5 to 7 days (37.7%), 8 to 10 days (12.7%) and 11 days or more (11%). Over 93.4% of respondents traveled with a couple, friends, and family members, whereas only 6.6% of respondents traveled alone or with organized groups.

Table 4-4 Characteristics of the Most Recent Leisure Trip of the Respondents

Variables	Frequency (N=304)	Percent (%)
Travel Experience (n=304)		
Yes	301	99
No	3	1
Domestic/international (n=301)		
Domestic	242	80.4
International	59	19.6
Trip Types (n=295)		
Outdoor trips	44	14.9
Resort trips	105	35.6
City trips	63	21.4
Cultural/heritage trips	38	12.9
Theme park trips	34	11.5
Others	11	3.7
Length of Trip (n=300)		
2-4 days	116	38.7
5-7 days	113	37.7
8-10 days	38	12.7
10 days or more	33	11.0
Travel Party (n=301)		
Alone	16	5.3
A couple	102	33.9
Friends/relatives	60	19.9
Family members	119	39.5
Organized group	4	1.3
Source of Information (n=301)		
Travel agents	23	
Magazines/books	63	
Newspapers	7	
Internet	159	
T.V.	11	
E-mail ads	7	
Friends/relatives	141	

4.3.4 Non-response Bias Tests

In the data analysis in this study, it is assumed that there is no different distribution or opinion between respondents and non-respondents in terms of their socio-demographic characteristics. In order to assess potential non-response bias, this study examined differences between early and late respondents in terms of demographic characteristics. The answers of the late respondents (those who returned completed surveys after the reminder postcard was mailed out) were compared with those of the early respondents (those who returned completed surveys before the reminder postcard was mailed out) to test for non-response bias by Chi-square tests (Table 4-5). Chi-square test performed on these two groups indicated that no significant differences existed between the early and late responses among the demographic characteristics of respondents except for age. The Chi-square tests for age showed a significant difference between the early and late respondents' group at a significant level of .05. It means that the early respondents mostly consisted of older individuals.

Table 4-5 Results of the Chi-square Tests for non-response bias

Variables	Early respondents	Late respondents	
Sex			
Female	79	44	
Male	133	47	$\chi^2 = 3.246$
Total	212	91	$p < .072$
Age			
18-25	18	6	
26-35	39	21	
36-45	39	25	
46-55	42	17	
56-65	34	17	
66 or older	28	1	$\chi^2 = 13.455$
Total	200	87	$p < .019$*
Marital Status			
Single	38	12	
Married	157	72	
Widowed	7	1	
Divorced	6	4	
Separated	3	1	$\chi^2 = 3.252$
Total	212	90	$p < .661$
Education			
High school	27	8	
College/university	105	41	
Graduate school	79	42	$\chi^2 = 2.376$
Total	211	91	$p < .305$
Total Household Income (USD)			
$30,000 or less	19	4	
$30,001-50,000	34	11	
$50,001-70,000	33	11	
$70,001-90,000	35	21	
$90,001-110,000	30	12	
$110,001 or more	50	28	$\chi^2 = 5.730$
Total	201	87	$p < .333$
Ethnic Groups			
Caucasian	172	68	
African-American	10	6	
Hispanic	6	2	
Asian	18	14	
Native American	2	0	
Others	4	1	$\chi^2 = 4.814$
Total	212	91	$p < .439$

Note: *0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.2.

4.3.5. Descriptive Statistics, Skewness, and Kurtosis

As all of the data had been keyed into SPSS by hand, before any tests were conducted using the data set, frequency distributions for each variable in the study were run and examined to ensure that the data were "clean." As could be expected, a few keying errors were evident, and the actual survey questionnaires corresponding with the survey coding number for the surveys that contained coding errors were pulled. The errors were corrected and frequencies were run a second time to ensure that all of the keying errors had been corrected. Then, measures of central tendency were run for each of the variables in the study. The mean scores and standard deviations in addition to the skewness and kurtosis of each of the variables in this study are shown in Appendix E.

In order to assess the normality of the distribution of the data, the skewness and kurtosis of each variable were investigated. The critical value for both of these measures of normality is drawn from a z distribution. The SPSS software package was used to generate the skewness and kurtosis values; zero assumes perfect normality in the distribution (which is seldom achieved), ± 2.58 indicating rejecting the normality assumption at the .01 probability level, and ± 1.96 signifies a .05 probability level (Hair et al. 1998). By applying the above criteria to the skewness value s for each of the variables, it is clear that no variable fell outside the ± 1.96 range for skewness. Thus, it can be assumed that all of the variables for this study were reasonably free from skewness.

Another data characteristic that was considered is the kurtosis: how observations "cluster around a central point" for a given standard distribution (Norusis, 1990, p.82).

Distributions that are more peaked than normal are called "leptokurtic," whereas those that are flatter than normal are regarded as "platykurtic." Positive values for kurtosis show that a distribution has a higher than normal peak. Because none of the variables fell outside a ± 2.58 rage for kurtosis, this study can conclude that none of variables was leptokurtic or platykurtic.

4.4. DATA ANALYSIS

This section will present the results of the statistical analysis of the data collected. First, the results of the confirmatory factor analysis of the seven constructs are presented. After confirming each construct, the results of the measurement model is presented. Then, the results of the structural equation modeling will be presented to test the proposed hypotheses.

4.4.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Each measurement model of the seven constructs can be examined through a process of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). A CFA is used to test the measurement model specifying the posited relations of the observed variables to the underlying constructs. The CFA approach examines whether or not the collected data are consistent with a highly constrained hypothesized model, or an a priori specified model (Byrne 1998; Maruyama 1997). Thus, CFA allows identification and clustering of the observed variables in a pre-specified, theory-driven hypothesized model to evaluate to what extent a particular collected data set confirms what is theoretically believed to be its underlying constructs (Mueller 1996)

In the following section, CFA was performed at each level of the construct to test the measurement model stipulating the relationships between the latent factors and their indicator variables. Since CFA is performed on the basis of the premise that the observed variables are not perfect indicators for the underlying constructs, each construct in the measurement model was tested separately and then the overall measurement model was evaluated. As discussed in Chapter III, the model estimation process for each model was provided along with statistical results. Modification indices, Absolute Fit Measure (AFM), Incremental Fit Measures (IFM), and Parsimonious Fit Measures (PFM) were utilized to evaluate the proposed model.

All analyses were conducted using LISREL 8.5 (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1993). These analyses employed the Maximum Likelihood (ML) method of parameter estimation because the collected usable sample was quite large (N=304), the scales of observed indicators were continuous, the normal distribution of the observed variables were met according to the results of skewness and kurtosis, and variables in the hypothesized model were believed to be valid.

4.4.4.1 CFA for Cognitive Destination Image

Five indicators were utilized to measure the cognitive destination image. For the input file, after specifying five observed indicators, the diagonal elements of the covariance matrix are fixed at one. The variance/covariance matrix of the cognitive destination image construct was assigned to a symmetric matrix with all parameters free to be estimated.

The results of the initial estimation of the CFA of the cognitive destination image construct were not acceptable since there was a Chi-square value of 24.09 with 5 degrees of freedom (p=0.00) and a Root Mean Square Error of Approximation should be less than .08 for a good fit (Byrne, 1998). Furthermore, other fit indices indicated a poor fit and suggested that the estimate parameters should be modified. Thus, based on the results of the *t*-value, standard error, squared multiple correlations (R^2), and completely standardized solution, one indicator ("this destination has a lot of friendly people") was deleted because of low t-value and high standard error.

After deleting one indicator and recreating the covariance matrices as an entered matrix for the CFA, the final results of the CFA for the cognitive destination image were presented (Table 4-6). The re-specified model resulted in a Chi-square of 7.23 with 2 degrees of freedom (p=.03). All other indices showed that the data successfully fit the model with GFI=.99, RMSEA=.08, RMR=.03, AGFI=.95, NNFI=.95 and PNFI=.50.

The completely standardized factor loading which determines the relative importance of the observed variables as indicators of the cognitive destination image revealed comparatively high loadings, ranging from .43 to .81. In terms of estimating the squared multiple correlations (R^2), which are used to examine the extent to which the measurement model adequately represents the observed indicators (Byrne, 1998; Kline, 1998), R^2 values ranged between .19 and .66. These coefficients also serve as indicator reliabilities (Bollen, 1989).

The composite reliability of this measurement construct resulted in .73, which exceeded the recommended threshold level of .70 (Hair et al., 1998). And, the variance extracted measure, another measure of reliability, represents the overall amount of variance in the indicators accounted for by the latent construct. The value should exceed a threshold guideline level of .50 for the construct (Hair et al., 1998). In this study, the extracted variance for the construct revealed a value of .50, which was same as the recommended level. Overall, the cognitive destination image construct retained four observed indicators with satisfactory results of fit indices.

4.4.4.2 CFA for Affective Destination Image

A total of four observed indicators were utilized to evaluate whether the gathered data fit the model of affective destination image. The results of the initial estimation of the CFA for the construct did not show a well-fitting model, having a Chi-square value of 110.63 with 2 degrees of freedom (p=0.00) and a Root Mean Square Error of Approximation of .398. Other fit indices indicated that the specified model was not acceptable and needed to be re-specified, showing GFI=.86, AGFI=.31, NNFI=-.13, IFI=.63, PGFI=.17, and Critical N=24.44. After reviewing the *t*-value, standard error, squared multiple correlations (R^2), and the completely standardized solution, one indicator ("this destination is very exciting") was deleted because of low contributions in fitting the data to model (Table 4-7).

Table 4-6 The Results of CFA for Cognitive Destination Image

Constructs & Indicators	Standardized loading (Li)	Reliability (Li^2)	Error Variance
Cognitive Destination Image		**.73**	**.53**
This destination is very peaceful	.60	.36	.79
This destination is very safe	.81	.66	.22
This destination has high standards of cleanliness	.54	.29	.37
This destination is family-oriented	.43	.19	.67
Fit Indices			
Absolute Fit Measures			
Chi-square (χ^2) of estimate model	7.23 (df=2, p= .03)		
Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI)	.99		
Root Mean Square Residual (RMR)	.03		
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	.08		
Incremental Fit Measures			
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI)	.95		
Non-normed Fit Index (NNFI)	.95		
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	.98		
Parsimonious Fit Measures			
Parsimony Goodness-of-Fit Index (PGFI)	.50		
Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	.50		
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	.98		
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	.98		
Critical N	438.10		

Note: The squared multiple (or standardized loading) correlations also serve as indicator reliabilities

After deleting one indicator and recreating the covariance matrices as an entered matrix for the CFA, the final results of CFA for the affective destination image were presented (Table 4-7). The re-specified model resulted in a Chi-square of .00 with 0 degree of freedom (p=1.00). All indices were perfect and the model was saturated.

The completely standardized factor loadings ranged from .21 to .82. The squared multiple correlations (R^2) ranged between .04 and .67. These coefficients also serve as indicator reliabilities (Bollen, 1989). The composite reliability of this construct resulted in .75, which exceeded the recommended threshold level of .70 (Hair et al., 1998). The extracted variance for the construct revealed a value of .53, which exceeded a recommended level of .50. Overall, the affective destination image construct got three observed indicators with satisfactory results of fit indices.

Table 4-7 The Results of CFA for Affective Destination Image

Constructs & Indicators	**Standardized loading (Li)**	**Reliability (Li^2)**	**Error Variance**
Affective Destination Image		**.75**	**.55**
This destination is very pleasant	.21	.04	.41
This destination is very exiting	.82	.67	.15
This destination is arousing	.69	.48	.44
Fit Indices			
Absolute Fit Measures			
Chi-square (χ^2) of estimate model	0.00 (<u>df</u>=0, <u>p</u>=1.00)		
The Model is Saturated, the Fit is Perfect!!!			

4.4.4.3 CFA for Perceived Quality

A total of six observed indicators were utilized to evaluate whether the colleted data fit the model of perceived quality. The results of the initial estimation of the CFA for the construct did not show a well-fitting model, having a Chi-square value of 214.94 with 9 degrees of freedom (p=0.00) and a Root Mean Square Error of Approximation of .258. Other fit indices indicated that the specified model was not acceptable and needed to be re-specified, showing GFI=.83, AGFI=.60, NNFI=.77, IFI=.86, PGFI=.36, and Critical N=40.04. After reviewing the *t*-value, standard error, squared multiple correlations (R^2), and completely standardized solution, three indicators ("the quality of this destination is very outstanding," "the quality of this destination is of high standard," and "the quality of this destination is very favorable") were deleted due to a low t-value, high standard error, and low contributions in fitting the data to model (Table 4-8).

After deleting three indicators and recreating the covariance matrices as an entered matrix for the CFA, the final results of CFA for the perceived quality were presented (Table 4-8). The re-specified model resulted in a Chi-square of .00 with 0 degree of freedom (p=1.00). All indices were perfect and the model was saturated.

The completely standardized factor loadings ranged from .56 to .65. The squared multiple correlations (R^2) ranged between .31 and .42. The composite reliability of this construct resulted in .82, which exceeded the recommended threshold level of .70 (Hair et al., 1998). The extracted variance for the construct revealed a value of .74, which exceeded a recommended level of .50. Overall, the perceived quality construct obtained three observed indicators with satisfactory results of fit indices.

Table 4-8 The Results of CFA for Perceived Quality

Constructs & Indicators	**Standardized loading (Li)**	**Reliability (Li^2)**	**Error Variance**
Perceived Quality		**.82**	**.74**
The quality of this destination is very reliable	.64	.41	.08
The quality of this destination is very dependable	.65	.42	.05
The quality of this destination is very consistent	.56	.31	.27
Fit Indices			
Absolute Fit Measures			
Chi-square (χ^2) of estimate model	0.00 (df=0, p=1.00)		
The Model is Saturated, the Fit is Perfect!!!			

4.4.4.4 CFA for Destination Recognition

Three indicators were used to estimate the single factor model of destination recognition. Estimation of this single factor model presented in Table 4-9 revealed that the model was saturated and the fit was perfect. The model resulted in a Chi-square of .00 with 0 degree of freedom (p=1.00).

The completely standardized factor loadings ranged from .74 to .93. The squared multiple correlations (R^2) ranged between .55 and .87. The composite reliability of this construct resulted in .67, which nearly met the recommended threshold level of .70 (Hair et al., 1998). The extracted variance for the construct revealed a value of .64, which exceeded a recommended level of .50.

Table 4-9 The Result of CFA for Destination Recognition

Constructs & Indicators	**Standardized loading (Li)**	**Reliability (Li^2)**	**Error Variance**
Destination Recognition		**.67**	**.64**
I have heard a great deal about this destination	.74	.55	.52
This destination is very visible	.90	.81	.27
This destination is very famous	.93	.87	.48
Fit Indices			
Absolute Fit Measures			
Chi-square (χ^2) of estimate model	0.00 (df=0, p=1.00)		
The Model is Saturated, the Fit is Perfect!!!			

4.4.4.5.CFA for Destination Familiarity

A total of four observed indicators were utilized to evaluate whether the colleted data fit the model of destination familiarity. The results of the initial estimation of the CFA for the construct did not show a well-fitting model, showing a Chi-square value of

18.03 with 2 degree of freedom (p=0.00) and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation of .153. Other fit indices indicated that the specified model was not acceptable and needed to be re-specified, showing AGFI=.87, NNFI=.81, PNFI=.31, PGFI=.19, and Critical N=165.02. After reviewing the *t*-value, standard error, squared multiple correlations (R^2), and completely standardized solution, one indicator ("I am very familiar with this destination") was deleted due to a low t-value and high standard error.

After deleting one indicator and recreating the covariance matrices as an entered matrix for the CFA, the final results of CFA for the destination familiarity were presented (Table 4-15). The re-specified model resulted in a Chi-square of .00 with 0 degree of freedom (p=1.00). All indices were perfect and the model was saturated (Table 4-10).

The completely standardized factor loadings ranged from .49 to .88. The squared multiple correlations (R^2) ranged between .24 and .77. The composite reliability of this construct resulted in .74, which exceeded the recommended threshold level of .70 (Hair et al., 1998). The extracted variance for the construct revealed a value of .50, which was the same as the recommended level of .50. Overall, the destination familiarity construct obtained three observed indicators with satisfactory results of fit indices.

Table 4-10 The Results of CFA for Destination Familiarity

Constructs & Indicators	Standardized loading (Li)	Reliability (Li^2)	Error Variance
Destination Familiarity		**.74**	**.50**
When I decide to travel, this destination comes to my mind	.63	.40	.77
This destination is quickly recalled among other competing destinations	.88	.77	.24
Some characteristics of this destination come to my mind quickly	.49	.24	.39
Fit Indices			
Absolute Fit Measures			
Chi-square (χ^2) of estimate model	0.00 (df=0, p=1.00)		
The Model is Saturated, the Fit is Perfect!!!			

4.4.4.6 CFA for Tourist Satisfaction

The measurement scale of tourist satisfaction contained three indicators. Three indicators were used to estimate the single factor model of destination recognition. Estimation of this single factor model presented in Table 4.11 revealed that the model was saturated and the fit was perfect. The model results in a Chi-square of .00 with 0 degrees of freedom (p=1.00).

The completely standardized factor loadings ranged from .64 to .69. The squared multiple correlations (R^2) ranged between .41 and .48. The composite reliability of this construct resulted in .78, which nearly met the recommended threshold level of .70 (Hair et al., 1998). The extracted variance for the construct revealed a value of .54, which exceeded a recommended level of .50.

Table 4-11 The Results of CFA for Tourist Satisfaction

Constructs & Indicators	Standardized loading (Li)	Reliability (Li^2)	Error Variance
Tourist Satisfaction		**.78**	**.54**
This destination is much better than what I expected	.64	.41	.39
This destination provides much more benefits than costs	.66	.44	.38
This destination is the best among other competing destinations	.69	.48	.35
Fit Indices			
Absolute Fit Measures			
Chi-square (χ^2) of estimate model	0.00 (df=0, p=1.00)		
The Model is Saturated, the Fit is Perfect!!!			

4.4.4.7 CFA for Tourist Loyalty

A total of four observed indicators were utilized to evaluate whether the collected data fit the model of tourist loyalty. The results of the initial estimation of the CFA for the construct did not show a well-fitting model, showing a Chi-square value of 8.00 with 2 degrees of freedom (p=0.02) and a Root Mean Square Error of Approximation of .10. Other fit indices indicated that the specified model was not acceptable and needed to be re-specified, showing AGFI=.86, NNFI=.80, PNFI=.33, and PGFI=.20. After reviewing the *t*-value, standard error, squared multiple correlations (R^2), and completely standardized solution, one indicator (“I am willing to pay a higher price than other destinations”) was deleted due to a low t-value and high standard error.

After deleting one indicator and recreating the covariance matrices as an entered matrix for the CFA, the final results of CFA for tourist loyalty were presented (Table 4-

17). The re-specified model resulted in a Chi-square of .00 with 0 degree of freedom (p=1.00). All indices were perfect and the model was saturated (Table 4-12).

The completely standardized factor loadings ranged from .62 to .84. The squared multiple correlations (R^2) ranged between .38 and .71. The composite reliability of this construct resulted in .84, which exceeded the recommended threshold level of .70 (Hair et al., 1998). The extracted variance for the construct revealed a value of .65, which was the same as the recommended level of .50. Overall, the tourist loyalty construct obtained three observed indicators with satisfactory results of fit indices.

Table 4-12 The Results of CFA for Tourist Loyalty

Constructs & Indicators	**Standardized loading (Li)**	**Reliability (Li^2)**	**Error Variance**
Tourist Loyalty		**.84**	**.65**
I will visit this destination again in the future	.62	.38	.57
I recommend this destination to other people who seek advice	.71	.50	.21
I encourage my friends/relatives to visit this destination	.84	.71	.09
Fit Indices			
Absolute Fit Measures			
Chi-square (χ^2) of estimate model	0.00 (df=0, p=1.00)		
The Model is Saturated, the Fit is Perfect!!!			

4.4.5 Testing the Proposed Model

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is used to evaluate a substantive theory with empirical data through a hypothesized model. The SEM presents a series of hypotheses about how the variables are related. The parameters of the model are the regression coefficient variance and covariance of the variables. The commonly-used approaches to estimate the parameters of structural equation models are maximum likelihood (ML) and normal theory generalized least squires (GLS). Both estimation techniques assume that the measured variables are continuous and have a multivariate normal distribution. However, maximum likelihood estimation has been the most commonly-used approach in SEM because ML estimations have been found to overcome the problems created by the violations of normality, which means that estimates are good estimates, even when the data are not normally distributed. Nonetheless, all indicators that already checked the normality showed that they had a fair normal distribution. Therefore, the properties of the items of seven constructs (five exogenous and two endogenous) in the proposed model and the hypotheses were tested using the LISREL 8.5 structural equation analysis package (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993) with the ML method of estimation (for recommendations for ML see Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Bentler, 1983), in combination with the two stage process recommended by Sethi and King (1994) and Anderson and Gerbing (1988).

4.4.6 Measurement Model

Maximum likelihood confirmatory factor analysis requires complete data for every subject in order to preserve the integrity of the data set. The majority of the variables had four or five missing cases. Therefore, cases with a missing value were replaced with the mean value of that variable. A confirmatory factor analysis conducted with a small sample size may result in inflated and spurious results. Monte Carlo studies suggest that for a relatively simple model, a minimum of 100 subjects is required (Bearden, Sharma, & Teel, 1982). For more complex models, substantially larger sample sizes are needed. With cases replaced by the mean value of the variables, the total 304 samples was kept and this sample size was considered large enough to satisfy the sample size requirements of confirmatory factor analysis. Another criterion requires that the correlation (or covariance) matrix include multiple measures of each underlying construct. In a single-factor model, at least three observed measures (indicators) of the factor are required. In a more complex (multiple-factor) model, two measures per factor may be sufficient (Byrne, 1998; Hoyle, 1995). All of the factors included in this study have at least two or three observed measures (indicators).

Prior to estimating the overall measurement model, measurement unidimensionality of each construct was assessed individually (Sethi & King, 1994) because it is important to make sure that the measures that are posited as alternate indicators of each construct are acceptably unidimensionl. Based on the results of the goodness-of-fit indices, modification indices, and estimated coefficient scores such as t-values and multiple correlations, the measurement models for each construct were modified and re-specified.

The measurement model for each construct with the observed indicators was determined on the basis of the statistical and theoretical soundness of the constructs. Thus, the model represented the best fitting model to the data in terms of parsimony and substantive meaningfulness.

With the sample (N=304), the overall measurement model with seven constructs and 22 observed indicators was tested by CFA. An initial estimation of the overall measurement model did not produce acceptable levels of model fit, having a Chi-square

(χ^2) value of 616.52 with 188 degrees of freedom (p=0.00) and a Root Mean Square Error of Approximation of .10. Other fit indices indicated that the specified model was not acceptable and needed to be re-specified, showing GFI=.86, AGFI=.81, NFI=84, NNFI=.85, CFI=.88, IFI=.88, and Critical N=127.36. After reviewing the *t*-value, standard error, squared multiple correlations (R^2), and completely standardized solution, one indicator of cognitive destination image ("this destination is very peaceful"), one indicator of affective destination image ("this destination is very pleasant"), and one indicator of destination recognition ("I have heard a great deal with this destination) were deleted because of low contributions in fitting the data to the model. Therefore, the re-specified overall measurement model with seven constructs and 19 observed indicators was estimated by CFA (Table 4-13).

The fit of the measurement model was tested using the LISREL 8.5 structural equation package with the maximum likelihood (ML) method of estimation. The primary interest in this section was to test whether the overall measurement model had acceptable fit or not. Before evaluation of the model as a whole, it is necessary to determine the viability of the individual parameters' estimated values. Parameter estimates should exhibit the correct sign and size and be consistent with the underlying theory. The second criterion relates to the statistical significance of the parameter. The test statistic used is the *t*-statistic, which represents the parameter estimate divided by its standard error. The *t*-statistic tests whether the estimate is statistically significant from zero. A *t*-test statistic that is larger than $\pm$1.96 indicates that the parameter estimate is significant at a .05 probability level. Table 4-14 presents the unstandardized parameter estimates for the proposed seven construct measurement model produced by LISREL.

Table 4-13 Constructs and Indicators for the Overall Measurement Model

Constructs	Indicators
Cognitive Destination Image	CDI1: This destination is very safe
	CDI2: This destination has high standards of cleanliness
	CDI3: This destination is family-oriented
Affective Destination Image	ADI1: This destination is very exiting
	ADI2: This destination is arousing
Perceived Quality	PQ1: The quality of this destination is very reliable
	PQ2: The quality of this destination is very dependable
	PQ3: The quality of this destination is very consistent
Destination Recognition	DR1: This destination is very visible
	DR2: This destination is very famous
Destination Familiarity	DF1: When I decide to travel, this destination comes to my mind
	DF2: This destination is quickly recalled among other competing destinations
	DF3: Some characteristics of this destination come to my mind quickly
Tourist Satisfaction	TS1: This destination is much better than what I expected
	TS2: This destination provides much more benefits than costs
	TS3: This destination is the best among other competing destinations
Tourist Loyalty	TL1: I will visit this destination again in the future
	TL2: I recommend this destination to other people who seek advice
	TL3: I encourage my friends/relatives to visit this destination

There are three lines of information for each observed indicator. The first one expresses the estimates, the parentheses value of the second one denotes the standard error, and the third one represents the *t*-value. An examination of the unstandardized parameter estimation in Table 4-14 revealed all estimates to be both reasonable and statistically significant.

Table 4-14 Parameter estimates for Overall Measurement Model (N=304)

LAMDA-X		CDI	ADI	PQ	DR	DF	TS	TL
CDI1	E	.66						
	SD	(.05)						
	T	13.45						
CDI2	E	.66						
	SD	(.04)						
	T	15.84						
CDI3	E	.45						
	SD	(.05)						
	T	8.56						
ADI1	E		.79					
	SD		(.05)					
	T		16.00					
ADI2	E		.72					
	SD		(.05)					
	T		13.79					
PQ1	E			.64				
	SD			(.03)				
	T			21.38				
PQ2	E			.66				
	SD			(.03)				
	T			22.60				
PQ3	E			.56				
	SD			(.04)				
	T			15.49				
DR1	E				.82			
	SD				(.06)			
	T				13.04			
DR2	E				.81			
	SD				(.06)			
	T				12.93			
DF1	E					.64		
	SD					(.05)		
	T					10.92		
DF2	E					.81		
	SD					(.05)		
	T					15.70		
DF3	E					.54		
	SD					(.04)		
	T					12.91		
TS1	E						.60	
	SD						(.05)	
	T						12.92	

LAMDA-X		CDI	ADI	PQ	DR	DF	TS	TL
TS3	E						.72	
	SD						(.04)	
	T						16.28	
TL1	E							.63
	SD							(.05)
	T							12.96
TL2	E							.73
	SD							(.04)
	T							19.22
TL3	E							.82
	SD							(.04)
	T							21.10

Note) E: estimate, SD: standard deviation, T: t-value, CDI: Cognitive Destination Image, ADI: Affective Destination Image, PQ: Perceived Quality, DR: Destination Recognition, DF: Destination Familiarity, TS: Tourist Satisfaction, TL: Tourist Loyalty, CDI1: This destination is very safe, CDI2: This destination has high standards of cleanliness, CDI3: This destination is family-oriented, ADI1: This destination is very exiting, ADI2: This destination is arousing, PQ1: The quality of this destination is very reliable, PQ2: The quality of this destination is very dependable, PQ3: The quality of this destination is very consistent, DR1: This destination is very visible, DR2: This destination is very famous, DF1: When I decide to travel, this destination comes to my mind, DF2: This destination is quickly recalled among other competing destinations, DF3: Some characteristics of this destination come to my mind quickly, TS1: This destination is much better than what I expected, TS2: This destination provides much more benefits than costs, TS3: This destination is the best among other competing destinations, TL1: I will visit this destination again in the future, TL2: I recommend this destination to other people who seek advice, TL3: I encourage my friends/relatives to visit this destination

The next step in estimating model fit is to examine the extent to which the measurement model is adequately represented by the observed variables. The squared multiple correlation (R^2) values generated by the LISREL 8.5 were used to determine whether the measurement model was adequately represented by the observed variables. The squared multiple correlation also expresses the indicator reliability. The values of the squared multiple correlations can range from .00 to 1.00, and serve as reliability indicators (Bollen, 1989). Examination of the R^2 values reported in Table 4.15 revealed that measures were moderately strong. The table also indicates that the strongest indicators were three measures of “perceived quality” and three measures of “tourist loyalty.”

After measuring the adequacy of the individual items, the composite reliability score and variable extracted estimate for each latent factor was assessed. The composite reliability score and variance extracted estimate for each latent variable (construct) were generated from completely standardized LISREL estimates and calculated by the formula provided by Fornell and Larcker (1981). As shown in Table 4.15, most of the composite reliability was above .70 with exception of the "destination recognition (R^2=.67)" construct. However, a composite reliability score that is between .60 and .70 represents the lower limit of acceptability (Hair et al., 1998). Therefore, this value was accepted as a marginally reliable measurement scale.

Next, the overall measurement fit was examined. A model is said to fit the observed data to the extent that the covariance matrix it implies is equivalent to the observed covariance matrix (Hoyle, 1995). The most common index of fit is the Chi-square (χ^2) goodness-of-fit, which is derived directly from the value of the fitting function. Therefore, first the Chi-square (χ^2) goodness-of-fit (and associate p-value) was examined. However, according to the nature of Chi-square (χ^2), Chi-square (χ^2) tends to be large in large samples (Jöreskog, 1993). In a Chi-square (χ^2) test, only the central Chi-square (χ^2) distribution is used to test the hypothesis that the discrepancy between the sample covariance matrix and the implied covariance matrix is statistically equal to zero.

Table 4-15 CFA for the Overall measurement Model (N=304)

Constructs & Indicators	Standardized loading (Li)	Reliability (Li^2)	Error Variance
Cognitive Destination Image		.71*	.51**
CDI1	.66	.44	.43
CDI2	.66	.44	.22
CDI3	.45	.20	.66
Affective Destination Image		.79*	.66**
ADI1	.79	.63	.20
ADI2	.72	.52	.40
Perceived Quality		.90*	.74**
PQ1	.64	.41	.08
PQ2	.66	.44	.05
PQ3	.56	.31	.27
Destination Recognition		.67*	.62**
DR1	.82	.67	.40
DR2	.81	.66	.42
Destination Familiarity		.82*	.50**
DF1	.64	.41	.75
DF2	.81	.66	.36
DF3	.54	.29	.33
Tourist Satisfaction		.76*	.65**
TS1	.60	.36	.44
TS2	.62	.38	.47
TS3	.72	.52	.29
Tourist Loyalty		.85*	.65**
TL1	.63	.40	.56
TL2	.73	.53	.18
TL3	.82	.67	.13

Note) *Composite reliability, **Variance extracted estimate, CDI: Cognitive Destination Image, ADI: Affective Destination Image, PQ: Perceived Quality, DR: Destination Recognition, DF: Destination Familiarity, TS: Tourist Satisfaction, TL: Tourist Loyalty, CDI1: This destination is very safe, CDI2: This destination has high standards of cleanliness, CDI3: This destination is family-oriented, ADI1: This destination is very exiting, ADI2: This destination is arousing, PQ1: The quality of this destination is very reliable, PQ2: The quality of this destination is very dependable, PQ3: The quality of this destination is very consistent, DR1: This destination is very visible, DR2: This destination is very famous, DF1: When I decide to travel, this destination comes to my mind, DF2: This destination is quickly recalled among other competing destinations, DF3: Some characteristics of this destination come to my mind quickly, TS1: This destination is much better than what I expected, TS2: This destination provides much more benefits than costs, TS3: This destination is the best among other competing destinations, TL1: I will visit this destination again in the future, TL2: I recommend this destination to other people who seek advice, TL3: I encourage my friends/relatives to visit this destination

However, even if the discrepancy between the estimated model and data is very small, if the sample size is large enough, almost any model will be rejected because discrepancy is not statistically equal to zero due to the excess power of the large sample size. In other words, the researcher is not likely to know everything about the data. Furthermore, the Chi-square (χ^2) test offers only a dichotomous decision strategy implied by a statistical decision rule and cannot be used to quantify the degree of fit along a continuum with some pre-specified boundary. In this study, the sample size was 304 and the Chi-square (χ^2) value for the saturated model was 291.06 (df=131, p=.00). The critical N (CN) indicated that if the sample size was 206.90, the Chi-square (χ^2) goodness-of-fit test would result in a low Chi-square (χ^2) value, and would be insignificant, showing an acceptable fit.

4.4.6.1 Fit indices

According to the problems associated with the Chi-square (χ^2) (and associate p-value), various different types of fit indices were selected to measure the fit of the tested model based on the recommendations of several researchers from a number of different disciplines. These selected fit indices are absolute fit indices, incremental fit indices, and parsimonious fit indices.

4.4.6.1.1 Absolute fit indices

An absolute fit index directly assesses how well an a priori model reproduces the collected sample data. The absolute fit indices include Chi-square (χ^2) of the estimated model, the Goodness-of-fit index (GFI), the Root Mean Square Residual (RMR), and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA).

The GFI is a measure of the relative amount of variance and covariance in sample data that is jointly explained by the sample data (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). The GFI was .92, indicating that the proposed model fitted the sample data fairly well (Byrne, 1998). The RMR is a measure of the average of the fitted residual and can only be interpreted in relation to the sizes of the observed variances and covariance in the sample data (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). Because the value of RMR in a well-fitting model should be close to .05 or less (Byrne, 1998), the RMR in this study was good enough (RMR=.04). The RMSEA attempts to correct for the tendency of the Chi-Square statistic to reject any specified model with a sufficiently large sample. Values of RESEA ranging from .05 to .08 are deemed acceptable (Mueller, 1996). The RMSEA (.06) shown in Table 4-16 represents that the proposed model was acceptable.

4.4.6.1.2 Incremental fit indices

An incremental fit index compares the target model with a baseline model in order to measure the proportionate improvement fit. The incremental fit indices include Adjusted goodness-of-fit (AGFI), Non-normed Fit Index (NNFI), and Normed Fit Index (NFI). The AGFI addresses the issue of parsimony by incorporating a penalty for the inclusion of an additional parameter. The value of AGFI (.90) concluded that the proposed model fit the sample data fairly well (Byrne, 1998). The NNFI takes the complexity of the model into account in the comparison of the proposed model with the independence model. The NFI is an index of the fit between a saturated model and a null model (Bentler & Bonett, 1995). The values of NNFI and NFI (.93 and .91 respectively) suggested that the proposed model represented an adequate fit to the data because the value of .90 or more indicates an acceptable fit to the data (Bentler, 1992).

4.4.6.1.3. Parsimonious fit indices

A parsimonious fit index provides information for comparison between models of differing complexity and objectives by evaluating the fit of the model versus the number of estimated coefficients needed to achieve that level of fit. The parsimonious fit indices include Parsimony goodness-of-fit Index (PGFI), Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Incremental Fit Index (IFI).

The PGFI addresses the issued of parsimony in SEM. It takes into account the complexity of the proposed model in the assessment of overall model fit. The PNFI adjusts for the number of free parameters in the model; it also controls for the fact that a better fit can be indicated by the other indices simply by freeing more parameters in the model (Mulaik et al., 1989). Because the two values (.63 and .70 respectively) exceeded .05, they indicated that the proposed model was acceptable. The CFI is the revised version of the NFI. It explains the sample in the comparison of the hypothesized model with the independence model (Bentler, 1990). The IFI addresses the issues of parsimony and sample size that are known to be associated with NFI. The value of CFI and IFI with .95 or more indicates an acceptable fit to the data. Therefore, the two values (.95 and .95 respectively) represented that the proposed model was an adequate fit to the data.

The last goodness-of-fit statistic reported in this study is the Hoelter's (1983) Critical N (CN). The CN addresses the issue of sample size rather than the model fit. The CN statistic estimates the sample size that would make the obtained Chi-square statistically significant (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). A cut-off point of 200 or greater is suggested as an indication of adequate model fit for the Critical N statistic (Bollen, 1989). The CN value for the proposed model was 206.90, for which the Chi-square (χ^2) would be significant.

Table 4-16 Fit Indices for the Overall Measurement Model (N=304)

Fit Index	**Value**
Absolute Fit Measures	
Chi-square (χ^2) of estimate model	291.06 ($\underline{df}$=131, $\underline{p}$= .00)
Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI)	.92
Root Mean Square Residual (RMR)	.04
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	.06
Incremental Fit Measures	
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI)	.90
Non-normed Fit Index (NNFI)	.93
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	.91
Parsimonious Fit Measures	
Parsimony Goodness-of-Fit Index (PGFI)	.63
Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	.70
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	.95
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	.95
Critical N	206.90

4.4.7 Convergent Validity

Convergent validity can be considered as a subcategory of construct validity (Kline, 1998; Zikmund, 1997). Convergent validity refers to the confirmation of the measurement of a construct by the use of multiple methods. It is overlaps between alternative measures that are intended to measure the same constructs but that have different sources of undesired variation (Judd et al., 1991). That is, if several observed indicators are used to measure a theoretical construct (ex. Latent variable), those observed indicators should share a good deal of variance (converge together).

In a study of structural equation modeling, the standardized factor loading can be examined to evaluate the convergent validity with an associated t-value from the result of confirmatory factor analysis (Marsh & Grayson, 1995). As seen in Table 4-14, the estimated coefficients standardized of the factor loading on their posited underlying construct yielded statistically significant results at the level of .05. Each observed indicator exceeded the recommended level of t-value (±1.96). Therefore, convergent validity was achieved for all variables in this study.

4.6.8 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity addresses the concept that "dissimilar constructs should differ" (Burns & Bush 1995, p.275). Applying this concept to the study at hand, this means that the indicators used to measure the different constructs in the proposed model should yield different results. To ensure that the constructs are not measuring the same concept or ideas, the discriminant validity was addressed for each construct by examining the constructs in sets of two. For example, the cognitive destination image was tested against the affective destination image (in order to establish that these two constructs were not measuring the same thing). Separately, the affective destination image was tested against perceived quality, and so forth until every possible pair of constructs was tested.

Discriminant validity was tested by constraining the estimated correlation parameter between each pair of constructs to 0 (the fixed model). This implied that the correlation parameter was given as 0.0 to indicate that the two constructs were uncorrelated. The unconstrained model (the free model) indicated that the correlation between factors was estimated. A Chi-square (χ^2) difference tested between the constrained model and the unconstrained model was performed. A significant Chi-square (χ^2) difference between the models provided evidence of discriminant validity between the pair of the constructs being tested (Anderson & Gerbing, 1998; Bagozzi, 1980). Also, a significantly lower Chi-square (χ^2) value for the unconstrained model indicated that discriminant validity was achieved (Bagozzi & Philips, 1982) and the goodness-of-fit statistics were improved in the unconstrained model when discriminant validity was achieved (Klein, Ettenson, & Morris, 1998).

Table 4-17 summarizes the correlations of each pair of constructs and Chi-square (χ^2) difference tests between the constrained model and the unconstrained model on each pair of constructs. The correlations of each pair of constructs ranged from .09 to .80. The Chi-square (χ^2) differences ranged from 109.50 to 262.19. Since the critical value of the Chi-square (χ^2) test was 9.21 at the alpha value of .01, all of the estimated Chi-square

(χ^2) difference values were clearly significant. In addition, when the correlation between the constructs was unconstrained, the model improved in terms of Chi-square (χ^2) value, GFI, RESEA, and CFI. This evidence confirmed that not all of the constructs were correlated perfectly.

Table 4-17 Results of Discriminant Validity Tests

Constructs	Correlation Value	χ^2 w/Corr. Fixed	df	χ^2 w/Corr. Free	df	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	P-value
CDI-ADI	.09	131.41	5	20.08	4	111.33	1	.00
CDI-PQ	.65	130.45	9	11.89	8	118.56	1	.00
CDI-DR	.20	140.29	5	30.63	4	109.93	1	.00
CDI-DF	.29	126.44	9	8.40	8	118.04	1	.00
CDI-TS	.52	157.53	9	30.60	8	126.93	1	.00
CDI-TL	.48	127.63	9	10.18	8	117.45	1	.00
ADI-PQ	.27	196.00	5	.49	4	195.51	1	.00
ADI-DR	.45	222.71	2	1.79	1	219.92	1	.00
ADI-DF	.53	207.92	5	1.15	4	205.92	1	.00
ADI-TS	.56	219.48	5	2.30	4	217.18	1	.00
ADI-TL	.51	240.94	5	7.87	4	233.07	1	.00
PQ-DR	.12	262.30	5	11.82	4	250.48	1	.00
PQ-DF	.35	265.55	9	7.33	8	258.22	1	.00
PQ-TS	.42	275.57	9	14.60	8	260.97	1	.00
PQ-TL	.39	268.15	9	5.96	8	262.19	1	.00
DR-DF	.41	250.34	5	4.32	4	246.02	1	.00
DR-TS	.21	254.00	5	12.47	4	241.53	1	.00
DR-TL	.23	260.62	5	3.60	4	257.02	1	.00
DF-TS	.66	154.43	9	40.75	8	113.68	1	.00
DF-TL	.68	141.98	9	32.48	8	109.50	1	.00
TS-TL	.80	155.52	9	32.81	8	122.71	1	.00

Note) CDI: Cognitive Destination Image, ADI: Affective Destination Image, PQ: Perceived Quality, DR: Destination Recognition, DF: Destination Familiarity, TS: Tourist Satisfaction, TL: Tourist Loyalty

4.6.9. Testing the Proposed Model and Hypotheses

The primary purpose of this study was to develop an integrated theoretical model of destination branding to discover the interplay of relationships among the constructs of this study, including destination image (cognitive destination image and affective destination image), perceived quality, destination awareness (destination recognition and destination familiarity), tourist satisfaction, and tourist loyalty in the leisure tourism market. Also, the study addressed the differences in the relationship among the constructs in terms of trip types.

In testing the proposed model and hypotheses for this study, a theoretical structural model was examined with five exogenous constructs, two endogenous constructs, and one moderate variable, as seen in Figure 4-2 &3. The properties of the seven research constructs are as follows: five exogenous-cognitive destination image (CDI), affective destination image (AFI), perceived quality (PQ), destination recognition (DR), destination familiarity (DF); and two endogenous-tourist satisfaction (TS) and tourist loyalty (TL). A total of 19 observed indicators (13 for exogenous constructs and 6 for endogenous constructs) were used to measure these research constructs.

Since the primary interest in SEM for testing hypotheses is to examine the relationships between/among the exogenous and endogenous constructs, the relationship can be specified by two types of matrices: a Gamma matrix (γ), and a Beta matrix (β) (Bollen, 1989; Byrne, 1998; Mueller, 1986). The Gamma matrix represents the regression coefficients that link the exogenous constructs and the endogenous constructs, while the Beta matrix specifies the regression coefficients that link the endogenous constructs.

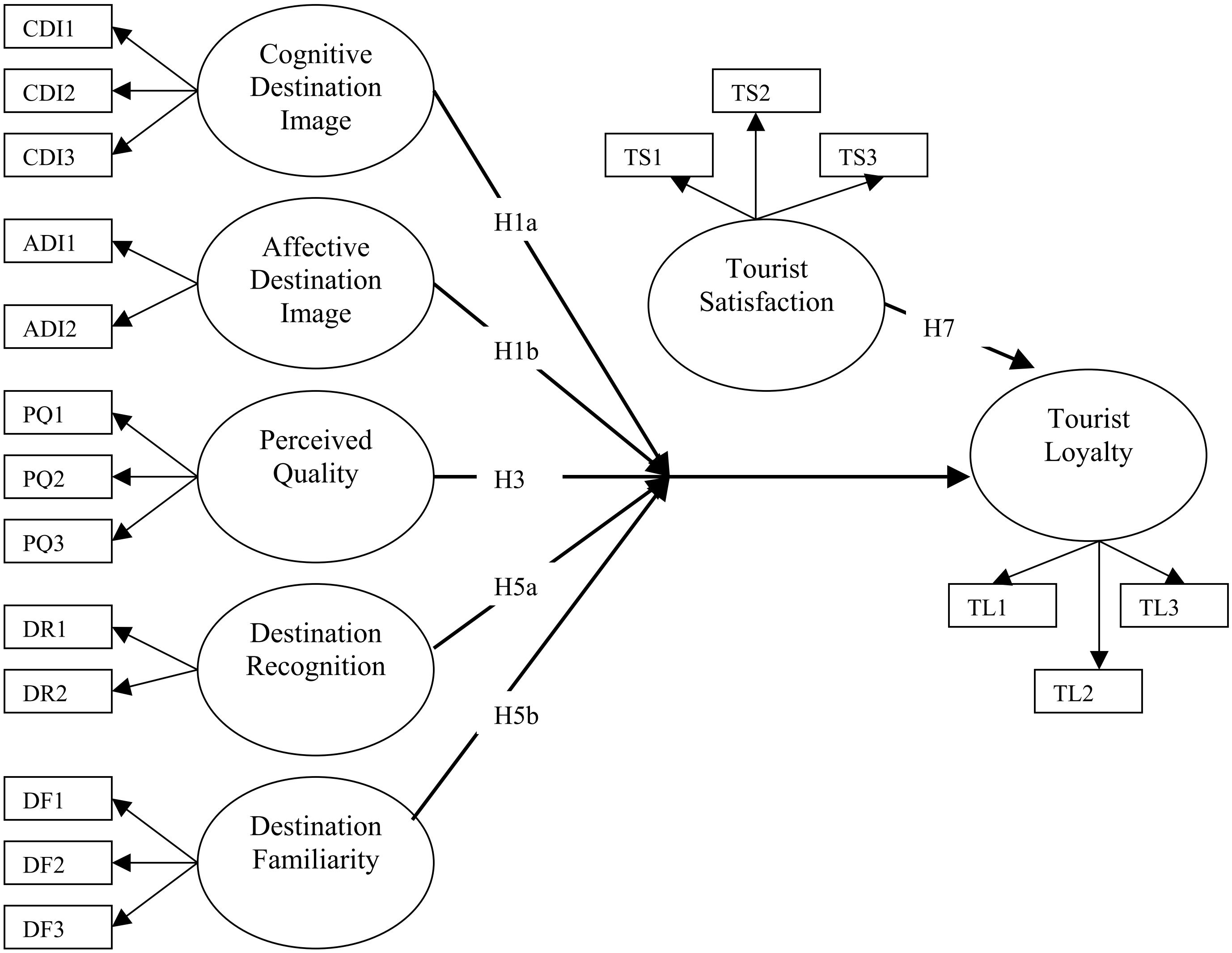


Figure 4-2 Tested Destination Branding's Direct Influence on Tourist Loyalty

Note) CDI1: This destination is very safe, CDI2: This destination has high standards of cleanliness, CDI3: This destination is family-oriented, ADI1: This destination is very exiting, ADI2: This destination is arousing, PQ1: The quality of this destination is very reliable, PQ2: The quality of this destination is very dependable, PQ3: The quality of this destination is very consistent, DR1: This destination is very visible, DR2: This destination is very famous, DF1: When I decide to travel, this destination comes to my mind, DF2: This destination is quickly recalled among other competing destinations, DF3: Some characteristics of this destination come to my mind quickly, TS1: This destination is much better than what I expected, TS2: This destination provides much more benefits than costs, TS3: This destination is the best among other competing destinations, TL1: I will visit this destination again in the future, TL2: I recommend this destination to other people who seek advice, TL3: I encourage my friends/relatives to visit this destination

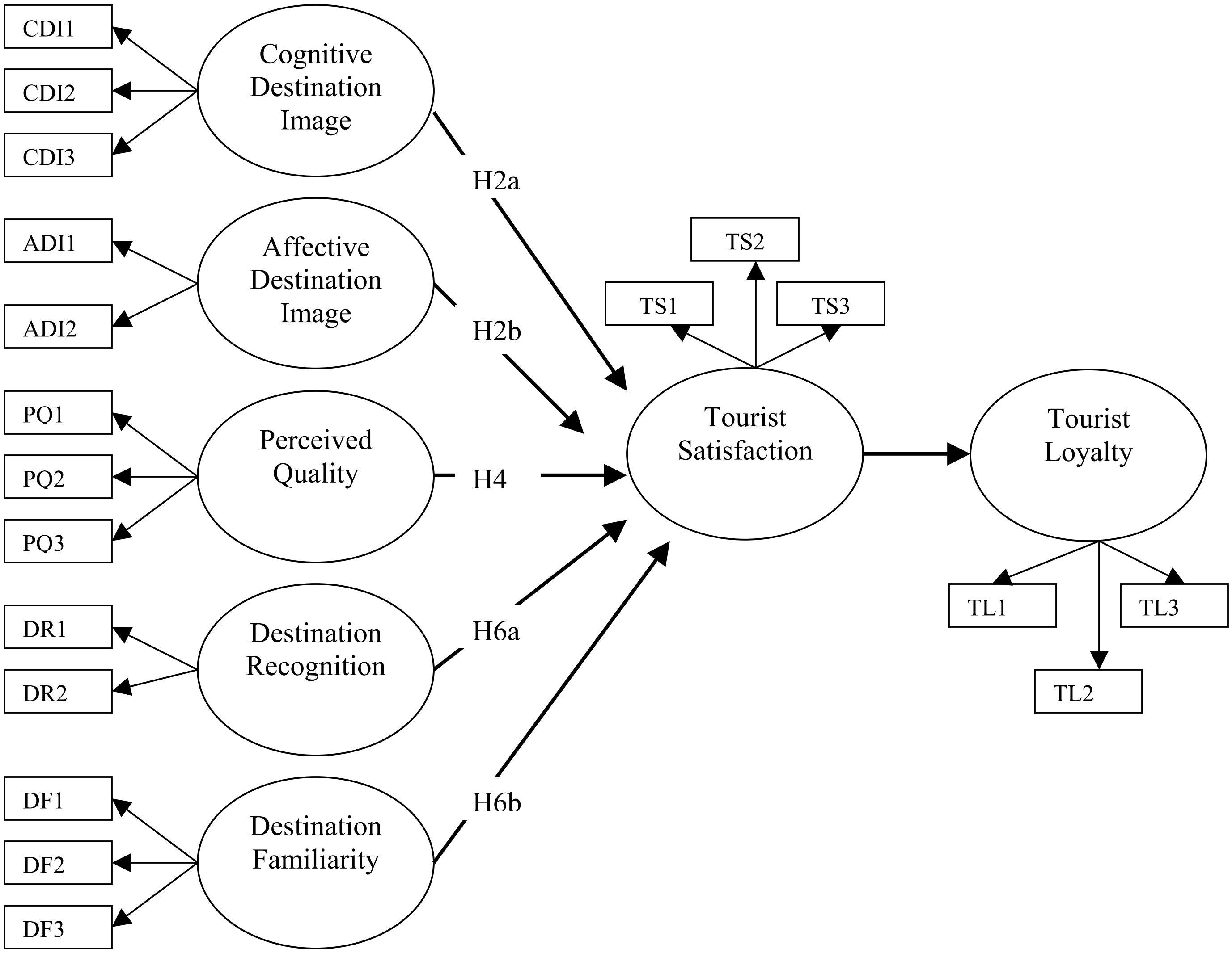


Figure 4-3 Tested Destination Branding's indirect Influence on Tourist Loyalty

Accordingly, this study comprised 10 Gamma parameters to be estimated and one Beta parameter to be estimated. Five out of 10 Gamma parameters to be estimated represented one of the proposed research hypotheses in this study.

For example, γ_{21} defined hypothesis 1 (Cognitive destination image as part of destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty, CDI→TL), and β_{21} represented hypothesis 7 (Tourist satisfaction has a positive influence on tourist loyalty, TS→TL). The structural equation model with 10 Gamma paths and one Beta path was tested using the LISREL program for structural equation modeling.

This study examined the indirect influence of destination branding on tourist loyalty, and provided the five hypotheses. For example, cognitive destination image as part of destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction (H2a, CDI→TS→TL). The eleven hypotheses, which are related to the seven constructs, were provided.

H1a: Cognitive destination image as part of destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty (CDI→TL).

H1b: Affective destination image as part of destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty (ADI→TL).

H2a: Cognitive destination image as part of destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction (CDI→TS→TL).

H2b: Affective destination image as part of destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction (ADI→TS→TL).

H3: Perceived quality as part of destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty (PQ→TL).

H4: Perceived quality as part of destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction (PQ→TS→TL).

H5a: Destination recognition as part of destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty (DR→TL).

H5b: Destination familiarity as part of destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty (DF→TL).

H6a: Destination recognition as part of destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction (DR→TS→TL).

H6a: Destination familiarity as part of destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction (DF→TS→TL).

H7: Tourist satisfaction has a positive influence on tourist loyalty (TS→TL).

The review of the theoretical structural model revealed that the Chi-square value of 291.10 with 131 degree of freedom ($p<.05$) was statistically significant. However, the critical N (CN) indicated that if the sample size was 206.90, the Chi-square (χ^2) goodness-of-fit test would result in a low Chi-square (χ^2) value, and it would be insignificant, showing an acceptable fit. Additionally, all of the goodness-of-fit statistics supported that the final model was a well-fitting model to the data and suggested that this model could be the structural model to be tested for the proposed hypotheses in this study (GIF=.92, RMR=.04, RMSEA=.06, NFI=.91, NNFI=.93, PGFI=.63, CFI=.95, IFI=.95) (Table 4-18).

Table 4-18 Fit Indices for the Proposed Theoretical Model (N=304)

Fit Index	Value
Chi-square (χ^2) of estimate model	291.06 (df=131, p= .00)
Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI)	.92
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI)	.90
Parsimony Goodness-of-Fit Index (PGFI)	.63
Non-normed Fit Index (NNFI)	.93
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	.91
Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	.63
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	.95
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	.95
Critical N	206.90
Root Mean Square Residual (RMR)	.04
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	.06

4.6.10 Analysis of Hypotheses

The results of structural equation analysis by LISREL were utilized to test the proposed hypotheses in this study. The relationships between the constructs were examined based on t-values associated with path coefficients between the constructs. If an estimated t-value is greater than a certain critical value ($p<.05$, t-value=1.96) (Mueller, 1996), the null hypothesis that was associated with the estimated parameter that was equal to 0 was rejected. That is, the hypothesized relationship was supported. The hypothesized theoretical modal and proposed hypotheses indicated that six of the proposed paths were significant. Therefore, the results supported six of eleven main hypotheses. This section of the chapter provides a detailed discussion and analysis of the hypotheses.

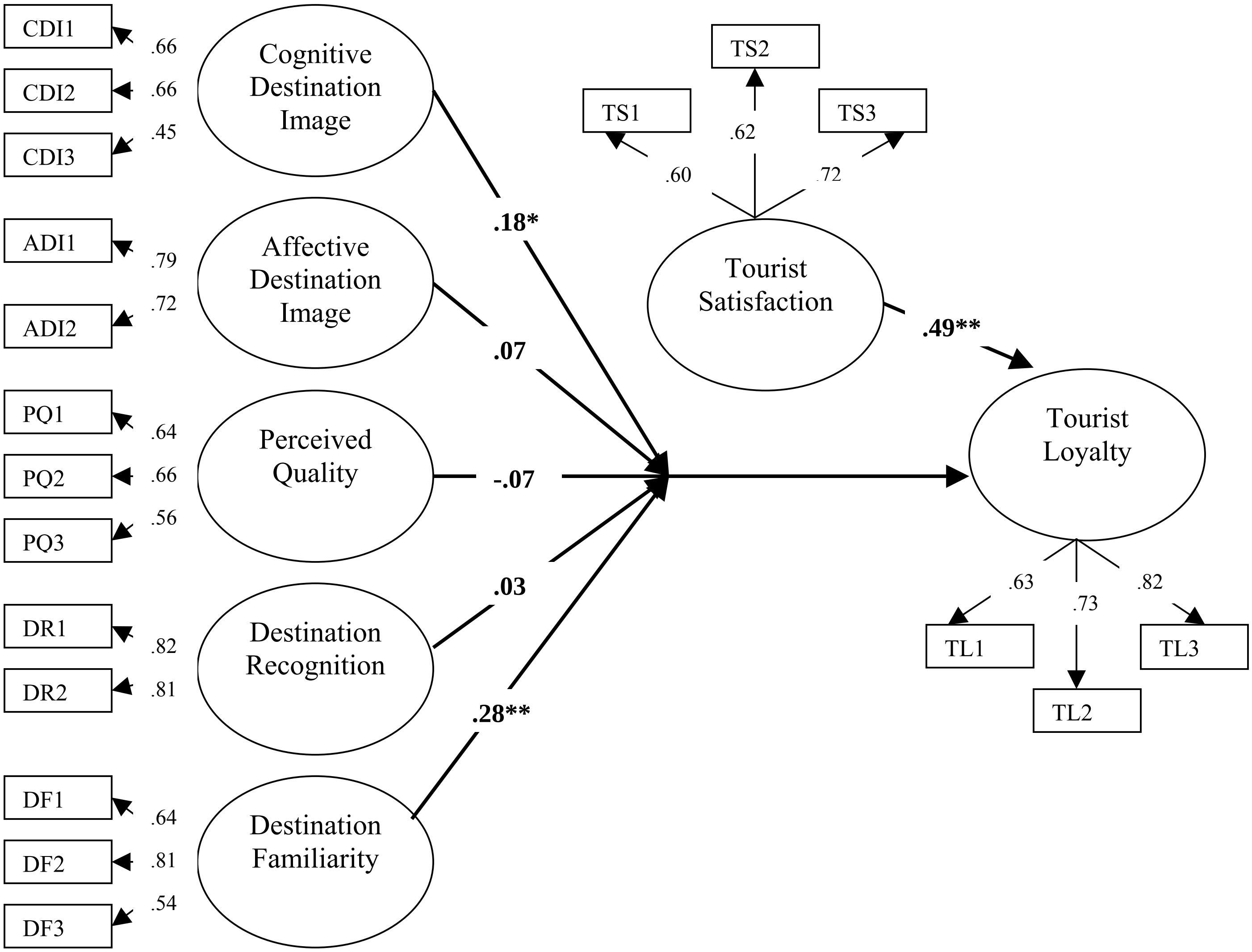
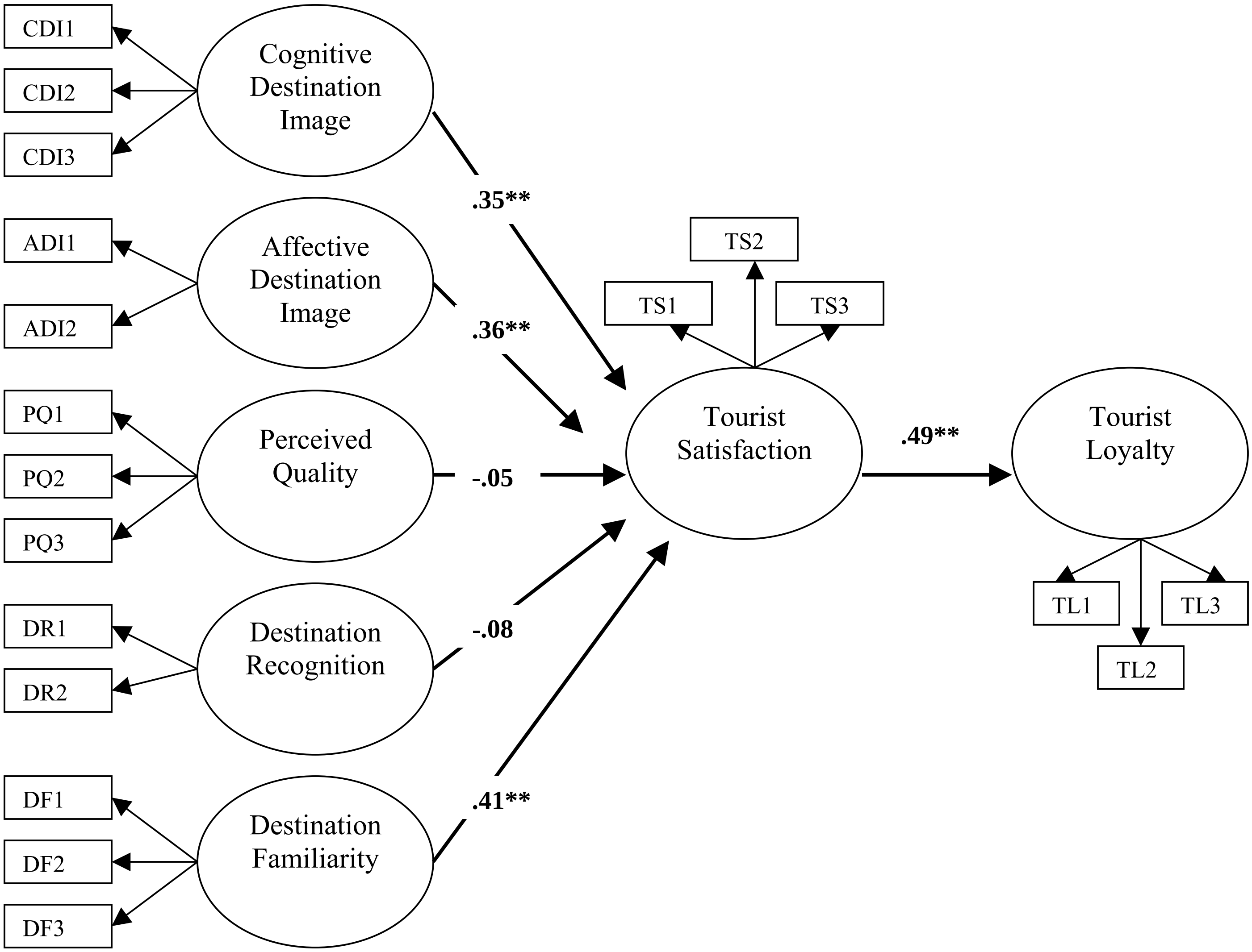


Figure 4-4 Final Structural Equation Model (Destination Branding's Direct Influence on Tourist Loyalty) (Note: *p<.05, **p<.01)



Indirect effect: CDI→TS→TL (.17**), ADI→TS→TL (.18**), PQ→TS→TL (-.02), DR→TS→TL (-.04), DF→TS→TL (.20**)

Figure 4-5 Final Structural Equation Model (Destination Branding's Indirect Influence on Tourist Loyalty) (Note: *p<.05, **p<.01)

H1a*: Cognitive destination image as part of destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty (CDI→TL).*

H1b*: Affective destination image as part of destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty (ADI→TL).*

H2a: *Cognitive destination image as part of destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction (CDI→TS→TL).*

H2b: *Affective destination image as part of destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction (ADI→TS→TL).*

In Hypotheses 1a to 2b, it was postulated that there are direct and indirect positive relationships between destination image (cognitive and affective destination image) and tourists loyalty. However, while cognitive destination image had direct and indirect positive influences on tourist loyalty (H1a: t-value=2.14, $p<.05$; H2a: t-value=3.20, $p<.01$), affective destination image had a positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction indirectly in Table 4-19. These results supported that if a tourist had a favorable cognitive destination image, the image of the destination positively affected tourist loyalty. Also, the results indicated that the cognitive destination image positively influenced tourist satisfaction as well as tourist loyalty through satisfaction. However, the affective destination image positively influenced tourist loyalty through satisfaction.

The results reported here are consistent with previous research findings. Destination image influenced tourist satisfaction and intention to repeat the visit in the future (Andreu, Bigne, & Cooper 2000; Beerli & Martin 2004b; Chon 1990; Court & Lupton 1997; Binge, Sanchez, & Sanchez 2001; Hu & Ritchie 1993; Joppe, Martin, & Waalen 2001).

Specifically, Chon (1990) adopted a cognitive consumer behavior theory known as evaluative congruity to create an integrated model of destination image and traveler buying behavior. The central postulate of the model was that a tourist's buying behavior could be explained through a framework of imagery change during the entire travel experience. He found that a positive destination image could result in a moderately positive evaluation of a destination and tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty.

Table 4-19 Estimate Coefficient for the Hypothesized Model (Destination Image)

			Coefficients (t-value)	
	Coefficients	t-value	Total Effect	Indirect Effect
H1a: CDI→TL	.18	2.14*		
H1b: ADI→TL	.07	1.05		
H2a: CDI→TS→TL			.35 (4.18**)	.17 (3.20**)
H2b: ADI→TS→TL			.25 (3.65**)	.18 (3.48**)

Note) *p<.05, **p<.01

***H3**: Perceived quality as part of destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty (PQ→TL).*

***H4**: Perceived quality as part of destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction (PQ→TS→TL).*

In hypothesis 3, it was postulated that perceived quality has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty. Consequently, in hypothesis 4, perceived quality has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction. These hypotheses were not supported by SEM analysis. Perceived quality did not significantly influence tourist loyalty (t-value=-.96, p>.05) and did not significantly influence indirectly tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction (t-value=-.54, p>.05) (Table 4-20).

The findings of this study were not consistent with the findings of the previous studies which mentioned the relationships among perceived quality, tourist satisfaction, and tourist loyalty. Many previous studies (Baker & Crompton 2000; Fornell et al. 1996; Oliver 1999; Oh 1999, 2000; Cronin et al. 2000; Ekinci 2003; Gallarza & Saura 2005; Knutson et al. 2003;McDougall & Levesque 2000, Petrick 2004; Petrick et al. 2001; Petrick & Backmann 2002) proposed that perceived quality and satisfaction were distinct constructs, there was a causal relationship between two constructs, and that perception of quality affected feelings of satisfaction which, in turn, influenced customers' future purchase behavior (tourist loyalty). They indicated that perceived quality was an antecedent of both satisfaction and loyalty.

Table 4-20 Estimate Coefficient for the Hypothesized Model (Perceived Quality)

			Coefficients (t-value)	
	Coefficients	t-value	Total Effect	Indirect Effect
H3: PQ→TL	-.07	-.96		
H4: PQ→TS→TL			-.09 (-1.16)	-.02 (-.54)

H5a: *Destination recognition as part of destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty (DR→TL).*

H5b: *Destination familiarity as part of destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty (DF→TL).*

H6a: *Destination recognition as part of destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction (DR→TS→TL).*

H6b: *Destination familiarity as part of destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction (DF→TS→TL).*

Hypotheses 5a and 6a investigated the positive direct and indirect influences of destination recognition on tourist loyalty. The results of SEM analysis did not support hypothesis 5a and 6a, having t-values of .44 and –1.02, which were not statistically significant at the level of .05. These findings indicated that destination recognition did not have a direct influence on tourist loyalty and an indirect influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction.

On the other hand, in hypothesis 5b, it was postulated that destination familiarity has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty. Consequently, in hypothesis 6b, destination familiarity has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction. These hypotheses were supported by SEM analysis. destination familiarity significantly influenced the tourist loyalty directly (t-value=3.36, $p<.01$) and significantly influenced tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction indirectly (t-value=3.65, $p<.01$) (Table 4 21).

There have been a few studies that investigated the relationships among destination familiarity, tourist satisfaction, and tourist loyalty, but the findings of this study could not match the previous studies exactly. However, previous studies (Balogle, 2001; Gursoy, 2001) explained destination familiarity. For example, Gursoy (2001) indicated that the familiarity of tourists with a destination was likely to influence tourist behavior and decision-making. Also, familiarity with a destination was a significant concept for tourist destinations because of its vital role in the tourist destination selection process. Baloglu (2001) found significant differences among three familiarity groups; the higher familiarity groups were more positively perceived and satisfied than the lower familiarity groups.

Table 4-21 Estimate Coefficient for the Hypothesized Model (Destination Awareness)

	Coefficients	t-value	Coefficients (t-value) Total Effect	Indirect Effect
H5a: DR→TL	.03	.06		
H5b: DF→TL	.28	3.36**		
H6a: DR→TS→TL			-.01 (-.67)	-.04 (-1.02)
H6b: DF→TS→TL			.25 (5.78**)	.20 (3.65**)

Note) *p<.05, **p<.01

H7*: Tourist satisfaction has a positive influence on tourist loyalty (TS→TL).*

In hypothesis 7, it was postulated that tourist satisfaction positively influenced tourist loyalty. The result of SEM analysis supported this hypothesis, having a positive relationship between the two constructs (t-value=4.96, p<.01) (Table 4-22). This finding suggested that if a tourist was satisfied with a destination, s/he had a loyalty to the destination.

The finding reported here was consistent with the findings of previous studies. Many studies in the marketing and tourism literature have concluded that customer satisfaction has a positive influence on customer loyalty and loyalty is a consequence of customer satisfaction (Baker & Crompton 2000; Cronin et al. 2000; Fornell et al. 1996; Kozak & Rimmington 2000; McDougall & Levesque 2000; Patrick 2004; Petrick et al. 2001; Petrick & Beckman 2002; Oh 1999: Oh & Parks 1997; Tam 2000; Yoon & Uysal 2005).

Ryan (1995) suggested that high loyalty is consistent with the importance of past satisfactory holiday experiences in determining destination choice. Oppermann (2000) concluded that satisfaction with travel experiences significantly contributes to destination loyalty. Baker and Crompton (2000) revealed that highly satisfied tourists were more loyal, increasing the probability that they would return and that they would spread positive word-of-mouth about the festival. The strong linkage between satisfaction and willingness-to-pay more was consistent with the belief that those who are highly satisfied are willing to pay more for the opportunity. Yoon and Uysal (2005) offered an integrated approach to understanding tourist motivation and attempted to extend the theoretical and empirical evidence on the causal relationships among motivation, tourist satisfaction, and destination loyalty. They concluded that tourist destination loyalty was positively affected by tourist satisfaction with the experience of the destination.

Table 4-22 Estimate Coefficient for the Hypothesized Model (Tourist Satisfaction)

			Coefficients (t-value)	
	Coefficients	t-value	Total Effect	Indirect Effect
H7: DS→TL	.49	3.36**		

Note) **p<.01

4.6.11 Testing of the Moderating Effect

This stage of data analysis deals with the moderating effect of trip types on the relationship between destination branding (cognitive destination image, affective destination image, perceived quality, destination recognition, and destination familiarity) and tourist satisfaction. This study used the SEM to examine the moderating effect.

Based on the U. S. Pleasure Travel Market in Canada Survey (1995), this study categorized trip types into outdoors trips, resort trips, city trips, cultural/heritage trips, and theme park trips. However, as is shown in Table 4-4, the distribution of trip types was rather dispersed, not yielding large enough numbers for most of the trip types. Therefore, this study divided trip types (moderating variable) into nature-based trips and urban trips. Nature-based trips included outdoor trips (camping, hiking, rafting, fishing, etc.) and resort trips (beaches, skiing, etc.)(Goeldner & Ritchie 2006, p 211). On the other hand, urban trips included city trips (shop, entertainment, etc.), cultural/heritage trips, and theme park trips (Burtenshaw, Bateman, & Ashworth, 1991; Jansen-Verbeke, 1986; Suh & Gartner, 2003). The testing of moderating effects included the following hypotheses.

H8a: *The relationship between cognitive destination image as part of destination branding and tourist satisfaction is moderated by trip types.*

H8b: *The relationship between affective destination image as part of destination branding and tourist satisfaction is moderated by trip types.*

H9: *The relationship between perceived quality as part of destination branding and tourist satisfaction is moderated by trip types.*

H10a: *The relationship between destination recognition as part of destination branding and tourist satisfaction is moderated by trip types.*

H10b: *The relationship between destination familiarity as part of destination branding and tourist satisfaction is moderated by trip types.*

The basic premise of the moderating effect is that responses to variations in the relationship between destination branding and tourist satisfaction depend on the trip type. In order to test the moderation (interaction) effect of the delineated two trip types (nature-based trips and urban trips), two steps were followed. The first step involved a ‘multiple-group' solution in which LISREL derived parameter estimates for each trip type separately without constraints across the trip types as well as a measure of pooled goodness-of-fit of the model for both trip types considered simultaneously. In the second step, the path coefficients were estimated for each trip type with an across-group constraint imposed to reflect the interaction effect (Jaccard & Wan, 1996). Based on the size of the difference in the value of Chi-squared changes from the base model to the constrained solutions, a decision about the interaction effect could be made. Table 4-23 provides the statistical comparisons of the trip type models for the interaction effect.

Table 4-23 Moderating Effect of Trip Types (Nature-based trip Vs. Urban trip)

	Chi-square (χ^2)	df	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	P-value
Base Model	306.96	178	-	-	-
CDI	311.79	179	4.83	1	<.05
ADI	315.70	179	8.74	1	<.05
PQ	307.77	179	.81	1	>.05
DR	312.06	179	5.10	1	<.05
DF	307.61	179	.65	1	>.05

Note) CDI: Cognitive Destination Image, ADI: Affective Destination Image, PQ: Perceived Quality, DR: Destination Recognition, DF: Destination Familiarity

The resulting Chi-square (χ^2) for the base model was 306.96 with 178 degrees of freedom. The differences in the Chi-squares for the constrained models were 4.83, 8.74, .81, 5.10, and .65 respectively. As it turned out, these differences were distributed as a Chi-square statistic with degrees of freedom equal to the differences between the base model and the constrained models' degrees of freedom, namely, 179-178=1. The difference of Chi-squares of cognitive destination image (4.83), affective destination image (8.74), and destination recognition (5.10) with 1 degree of freedom was statistically significant ($\underline{p}$=.05), suggesting that the differences in model fit were statistically significant . Interaction effects were present, because making the assumption of no interaction (i.e., equal slopes for nature based trips and urban trips) significantly adversely affected model fit. However, the differences in the Chi-square of perceived quality (.81) and destination familiarity (.65) were not significant. That is, the relationships between cognitive destination image, affective destination image, and destination recognition as part of destination branding, and tourist satisfaction were moderated by trip type (nature-based trip vs. urban trip). Table 4-24 presents the statistical results of the estimated path coefficients with their associated *t*-values for nature-based trips and urban trips.

Table 4-24 Results of Trip Types (Nature-based trip Vs. Urban trip)

Trip Types	Coefficients	t-values
Nature Based Trip		
CDI→TS	.34	3.53**
ADI→TS	.38	3.56**
PQ→TS	-.10	-.85
DR→TS	-.20	-2.30*
DF→TS	.36	3.06**
Urban Trip		
CDI→TS	.18	2.07*
ADI→TS	.19	2.10*
PQ→TS	-.02	-.17
DR→TS	.03	.32
DF→TS	.44	2.78**

Note) *p<.05, **p<.01 CDI: Cognitive Destination Image, ADI: Affective Destination Image, PQ: Perceived Quality, DR: Destination Recognition, DF: Destination Familiarity, TS: Tourist Satisfaction

The path coefficients provided the estimates of the regression coefficients for nature-based trips and urban trips. For example, the path coefficient from the latent variable of cognitive destination image to tourist satisfaction for nature-based trips was .34, whereas for urban destination, the corresponding path coefficient was .18. The difference between the path coefficients was statistically significant because of the nested fit test. The impact of cognitive destination image on tourist satisfaction was stronger for nature-based trip than for urban trip. Also, the influence of affective destination image on tourist satisfaction was stronger for nature-based trips than (.38) for urban trips (.19). However, the influence of perceived quality and destination recognition on the satisfaction was negatively stronger for nature-based trips (-.10, -.20, respectively) than for urban trips (-.02, .03, respectively). On the other hand, the impact of destination familiarity on tourist satisfaction was stronger than for urban trips (.44) than for nature-based trips (.36).

In order to confirm the results of the moderating effect of trip type (nature-based trips vs. urban trips), multiple regression analyses were used to check the coefficients. Table 4-25 compares the results (coefficients and *t*-values) of LISREL with those of multiple regression analysis.

Table 4-25 Comparison of LISREL with Multiple Regression Analysis

Trip Types	LISREL		Multiple Regression	
	Coefficients	*t*-values	Coefficients	*t*-values
Nature Based Trip				
CDI→TS	.34	3.53**	.29	3.81**
ADI→TS	.38	3.56**	.37	5.18**
PQ→TS	-.10	-.85	-.04	-.48
DR→TS	-.20	-2.30*	-.14	-1.88
DF→TS	.36	3.06**	.31	4.21**
Urban Trip				
CDI→TS	.18	2.07*	.21	2.85*
ADI→TS	.19	2.10*	.31	4.27**
PQ→TS	-.02	-.17	.10	1.31
DR→TS	.03	.32	.00	.00
DF→TS	.44	2.78**	.27	3.76**

Note) *p<.05, **p<.01 CDI: Cognitive Destination Image, ADI: Affective Destination Image, PQ: Perceived Quality, DR: Destination Recognition, DF: Destination Familiarity, TS: Tourist Satisfaction

4.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter IV covered the data analysis from the pretest of the scale items and the final survey. The first section presented the results of the pretest and discussed the method of sampling and descriptive information of the pretest. The second section provided a description of the survey method employed in the study and the demographic profiles of the final survey. The third section presented the confirmatory factor analysis results, measurement model testing, and the test of the proposed structural equation model and hypotheses. The final section tested the moderating effects for hypotheses by using LISREL. Table 4-26 provides a summary of hypothesis testing results

Table 4.26 Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypotheses	Results
H1a: Cognitive destination image as part of destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty.	Supported
H1b: Affective destination image as part of destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty.	Not supported
H2a: Cognitive destination image as part of destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction.	Supported
H2b: Affective destination image as part of destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction.	Supported
H3: Perceived quality as part of destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty.	Not supported
H4: Perceived quality as part of destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction.	Not supported
H5a: Destination recognition as part of destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty.	Not supported
H5b: Destination familiarity as part of destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty.	Supported
H6a: Destination recognition as part of destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction.	Not supported
H6b: Destination familiarity as part of destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction.	Supported
H7: Tourist satisfaction has a positive influence on tourist loyalty.	Supported
H8a: The relationship between cognitive destination image as part of destination branding and tourist satisfaction is moderated by trip types	Supported
H8b: The relationship between affective destination image as part of destination branding and tourist satisfaction is moderated by trip types	Supported
H9: The relationship between perceived quality as part of destination branding and tourist satisfaction is moderated by trip types.	Not supported
H10a: The relationship between destination recognition as part of destination branding and tourist satisfaction is moderated by trip types	Supported
H10b: The relationship between destination familiarity as part of destination branding and tourist satisfaction is moderated by trip types	Not supported

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the summary, discussion and implications of the findings of the study. The first section includes the summary and discussion of the hypotheses testing. The second section discusses the managerial implications and theoretical implications of the findings and the limitations of the study. The final section of this chapter concludes with suggestions for future research.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

This study theoretically developed and empirically tested a structural equation model of “destination branding” that attempted to identify how destination branding (destination image, perceived quality, and destination awareness) influences tourist behavior (satisfaction and loyalty) in the leisure tourism market. The proposed theoretical model presented in Figure 3-1 examined: 1) direct effects of destination image, perceived quality, and destination awareness on tourist loyalty, 2) indirect effects of destination image, perceived quality, and destination awareness on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction, 3) the relationship between tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty, and 4) the moderating effects of trip types on the relationship between cognitive destination image, affective destination image, perceived quality, destination recognition, and destination familiarity, and tourist satisfaction.

Before conducting the actual study, a pretest was done to make sure that the proposed constructs and the items that were proposed to measure those constructs were valid and reliable. Measurement scales of constructs were refined based on the findings of the pretest. The results of the pretest also suggested that the destination image construct and destination awareness had a two-factor structure. As a result, the proposed model was modified to accommodate the findings of the pretest. The modified theoretical model was presented in Figure 4-1.

This study specially focused on leisure tourists to domestic and international destinations. This focus was selected in order to address the impacts of destination branding on their behavior. This relationship was captured by asking respondents to complete a survey based on their most recent leisure (pleasure) trip. The result was a final usable sample of 304 tourists. Results indicated that more than half of the respondents were male (59.4%), which was consistent with the findings of other studies (60.3%- Gursoy 2001; 53.3%- Kim 2002; 59.6%- Han 2005), which obtained the sample (mailing lists) from the ReferenceUSA database (www.referenceusa.com). The high number of responses from male respondents may be the result of using telephone directories to obtain the mailing list. An examination of telephone directories revealed that most of the time, telephone numbers were listed under the male partner's name. Since the survey was directly addressed to the name listed in the phone book, it was not surprising to have more responses from males than females.

This study developed and tested a measurement model for the five constructs of destination branding through a pretest and an actual test. These five constructs of destination branding were cognitive destination image, affective destination image, perceived quality, destination recognition, and destination familiarity. Each construct was measured by at least two indicators.

The results of this study indicated that destination branding directly influenced tourist loyalty, and indirectly influenced tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction. However, only two constructs of destination branding -cognitive destination image and destination familiarity- directly impacted tourist loyalty, even though the positive direct influence of the five constructs was hypothesized. Furthermore, two constructs of destination branding -perceived quality and destination recognition- did not indirectly influence tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction, even if the positive impact of the two constructs on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction was hypothesized. In addition, the moderating effects of trip type on the relationships among the three constructs of destination branding and tourist satisfaction were statistically significant. These findings will be specifically discussed in the next section.

5.3 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The discussion section first addressed the development and testing of destination branding and tourist behavior. Three constructs of destination branding, tourist satisfaction, tourist loyalty, and trip type, were discussed in detail in Chapter II in order to provide a better understanding of the influence of destination branding on tourist behavior. The constructs of destination branding are destination image, perceived quality, and destination awareness. The constructs of tourist behavior are tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty. A multiple indicator measurement scale was developed for each construct in Chapter III.

In Chapter IV, a pretest was conducted on measurement scales for each construct. The pretest resulted in two destination image constructs (cognitive destination image and affective destination image), two destination awareness constructs (destination recognition and destination familiarity), and refinement of the measurement scales for each construct. An examination of Cronbach's Alpha reliability estimate of each construct indicated that all constructs had at least .78 Cronbach's Alpha reliability score, which is quite acceptable (Hair et al., 1998).

For an analysis of the structural equation modeling, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was first conducted to refine the posited relationships of the observed indicators to the constructs. CFA resulted in elimination of some indicators from the proposed model to preserve the unidimensionality of each scale. Through CFA, the unidimensionality was confirmed and the composite reliabilities for each construct were calculated. Those reliability scores were cognitive destination image (.73), affective destination image (.75), perceived quality (.82), destination recognition (.67), destination familiarity (.74), tourist satisfaction (.78), and tourist loyalty (.84). The composite reliabilities of all constructs except destination recognition exceeded the recommended level of .70 (Hair et al., 1998). Even though the composite reliabilities of destination recognition were found to be lower than .70, it was included in the study due to the fact that a reliability score that is between .60 and .70 represents the lower limit of acceptability (Hair et al., 1998).

A detailed examination of the observed indicators of the constructs showed that cognitive destination image was measured by four indicators (affective destination image-3; perceived quality-3; destination recognition-3; destination familiarity-3; tourist satisfaction-3; tourist loyalty-3).

Having confirmed the posited relationships of the constructs, the overall measurement model was tested to observe if the theoretical measurement model fit the data fairly well. Therefore, the overall measurement model for seven constructs was done to check the unidimensionality of the scale to measure each construct. The results indicated that an indicator of cognitive destination image, an indicator of affective destination image, and an indicator of destination recognition were eliminated, because they had comparatively high measurement errors and low correlations to the construct. The final indicators for seven constructs were three observed indicators for cognitive destination image, two for affective destination image, three for perceived quality, two for destination recognition, three for destination familiarity, three for tourist satisfaction, and three for tourist loyalty. As a result, 19 indicators remained to measure the seven constructs. These processes were done to help not only to identify the unidimensionality of the constructs but also to clarify the observed indicators of the related construct.

5.3.1 Research Question and Hypotheses

Table 5-1 presents a summary of the hypotheses tested and the standardized coefficients or Chi-square (χ^2) for each hypothesis. As seen in Table 5-1, the findings of this study supported nine of the proposed sixteen hypotheses. The following section mentions the research questions and the hypotheses that were empirically tested.

Table 5.1 Hypothesized Relationships and Results

Hypotheses	Standardized Coefficients	Results
H1a: CDI→TL	.18*	Supported
H1b: ADI→TL	.07	Not supported
H2a: CDI→TS→TL	.17*	Supported
H2b: ADI→TS→TL	.18*	Supported
H3: PQ→TL	-.07	Not supported
H4: PQ→TS→TL	-.02	Not supported
H5a: DR→TL	.03	Not supported
H5b: DF→TL	.28*	Supported
H6a: DR→TS→TL	-.04	Not supported
H6b: DF→TS→TL	.20*	Supported
H7: TS→TL	.49*	Supported
Hypotheses (moderating effect)	**Chi-square (χ^2)**	**Results**
H8a: CDI & TS	4.83*	Supported
H8b: ADI &TS	8.74*	Supported
H9: PQ & TS	.81	Not supported
H10a: DR & TS	5.10*	Supported
H10b: DF & TS	.65	Not supported

Note) CDI: Cognitive Destination Image, ADI: Affective Destination Image, PQ: Perceived Quality, DR: Destination Recognition, DF: Destination Familiarity, TS: Tourist Satisfaction, TL: Tourist Loyalty

Research Question 1 examines *if tourist loyalty is influenced by destination branding: destination image, perceived quality, and destination awareness.*

Research question 1 was addressed by ten hypotheses: H1a: Cognitive destination image as part of destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty; H1b: Affective destination image as part of destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty; H2a: Cognitive destination image as part of destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction; H2b: Affective destination image as part of destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction; H3: Perceived quality as part of destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty; H4: Perceived quality as part of destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction; H5a: Destination recognition as part of destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty; H5b: Destination familiarity as part of destination branding has a direct positive influence on tourist loyalty; H6a: Destination recognition as part of destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction; and H6b: Destination familiarity as part of destination branding has an indirect positive influence on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction.

The findings of the structural analysis for destination image as part of destination branding supported hypothesis 1a, 2a, and 2b. That is, cognitive destination image (safety, cleanliness, and family-oriented) had a direct positive effect on tourist loyalty and an indirect positive effect on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction. However, affective destination image (excitement and arousal) had only indirect positive effects on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction. These results were consistent with previous studies of destination image. Many studies (Andreu, Bigne, & Cooper 2000; Beerli & Martin 2004b; Chon 1990; Court & Lupton 1997; Binge, Sanchez, & Sanchez 2001; Hu & Ritchie 1993; Joppe, Martin, & Waalen 2001; Lee, 2001) indicated that destination image influences tourist satisfaction and intention to repeat the visit in the future, depending on the destination's capacity to provide experiences that correspond with their needs and fit the image they had of the destination. Especially, Court and Lupton (1997) found as a result of their study of the image of New Mexico, that the image of the destination positively affected an intention to revisit in the future. Lee (2001) found that destination image was a significant precedent to destination loyalty. Binge et al. (2001) focused on the relationship between the image of a destination as perceived by tourists and their behavioral intention, and examined the relationship between destination image and satisfaction. They confirmed that a destination image had a positive influence on tourist's satisfaction as well as tourist loyalty. Therefore, destination image plays a fundamental role in the success of tourist destinations, since image exercises a strong influence on tourist behavior in the tourism sector (Beerli & Martin 2004b). However, these previous studies did not classify destination image into cognitive and affective destination image.

The findings of perceived quality did not supported H3 and 4. That is, high perceived quality (reliability, dependability, consistence) did not influence directly and indirectly tourist loyalty. These results were not consistent with findings of the previous studies, which indicated the relationship among perceived quality, tourist satisfaction, and tourist loyalty. Many previous studies proposed that the perceived quality and satisfaction were distinct constructs and there was a causal relationship between two constructs, and that perception of the quality affected feelings of satisfaction which influenced customers' future purchase behavior (tourist loyalty). They indicated that perceived quality was an antecedent of both satisfaction and loyalty (Baker & Crompton 2000; Fornell et al. 1996; Oliver 1999; Oh 1999, 2000; Cronin et al. 2000; Ekinci 2003; Gallarza & Saura 2005; Knutson et al. 2003;McDougall & Levesque 2000, Petrick 2004;

Petrick et al. 2001; Petrick & Backmann 2002). Baker and Crompton (2000) confirmed that satisfaction was enhanced by higher perceived quality, which was consistent with the quality → satisfaction → behavioral intentions relationship flow postulated by Cronin and Taylor (1992). They suggested that high perceived quality encourages tourists to be more loyal, increasing the probability that they will return and that they will spread positive word-of-mouth about the destination. Bigne, Sanchez, and Sanchez (2001) indicated that since quality was an immediate antecedent of satisfaction, and affected intention to return directly and through satisfaction, its measurement and improvement were crucial aspects for those in charge of the destination.

However, Sirakaya, McLellan, & Uysal (1996) indicated that the high perceived quality of the destination does not guarantee tourists' intention to return in the future, as they may seek variety and be dependent on their family budget and time availability. In fact, on many occasions tourists do seek variety and prefer to visit new destinations.

The findings of the structural analysis for destination awareness as part of destination branding supported hypotheses 5b and 6b. That is, destination familiarity had a direct positive effect on tourist loyalty and an indirect positive effect on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction, while destination recognition did not have direct and indirect impacts on tourist loyalty. The findings of destination familiarity were consistent with those of the previous studies. Hu and Ritchie (1993) noted that familiarity with a destination was a major influence on destination perceptions and attractiveness. They reported significant differences between the images of non-visitors and visitors to the destinations. They pointed out that familiarity had an influence on perception of destination and tourist satisfaction and loyalty. Baloglu (2001) developed a destination familiarity index as a composite of experiential (previous experience) and informational familiarity. He found significant differences among three familiarity groups; the higher the familiarity, the more positive was the image of Turkey on the dimensions. And, the higher familiarity groups more positively perceived the destination and were satisfied than the lower familiarity groups.

Research Question 2 examines if *there is a relationship between tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty.*

Research question 2 was addressed by one hypothesis: H7: Tourist satisfaction has a positive influence on tourist loyalty. The finding supported that tourist satisfaction has a positive effect on tourist loyalty. That is, satisfied tourists could be more loyal, increasing the probability that they would return and that they would spread positive word-of-mouth about the destination. This finding is consistent with previous studies' findings. Many studies in the marketing and tourism literature concluded that customer satisfaction has a positive influence on customer loyalty, and loyalty was a consequence of customer satisfaction (Baker & Crompton 2000; Cronin et al. 2000; Fornell et al. 1996; Kozak & Rimmington 2000; McDougall & Levesque 2000; Patrick 2004; Petrick et al. 2001; Petrick & Beckman 2002; Oh 1999: Oh & Parks 1997; Tam 2000; Yoon & Uysal 2005). Several researchers (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Oppermann 2000; Yoon & Uysal 2005) mentioned that tourist satisfaction was important to successful destination marketing because it influenced the choice of destination, the consumption of products and services, and the decision to return. In particular, Ryan (1995) reported a high incidence of repeat visitation among the responding mature travelers to the Mediterranean island of Majorca. He found that respondents have visited the island at least once for the previous 5 years, indicating a very destination loyal segment. Ryan suggested that the high loyalty was consistent with the importance of past satisfactory holiday experiences in determining destination choice. Oppermann (2000) explored the application and usefulness of destination loyalty. He suggested that the degree of tourists' loyalty to a destination was reflected in their intentions to revisit the destination and in their recommendation to others. He concluded that satisfaction with travel experiences significantly contributed to destination loyalty. Yoon and Uysal (2005) offered an integrated approach to understanding tourist motivation and attempted to extend the theoretical and empirical evidence on the causal relationships among motivation, tourist satisfaction, and destination loyalty. They concluded that tourist destination loyalty was positively affected by tourist satisfaction with the experience of the destination.

Research Question 3 examines *if the existing nature of the relationship between destination branding and tourist satisfaction is moderated by trip types.*

Research question 3 was addressed by five hypotheses: H8a: The relationship between cognitive destination image as part of destination branding and tourist satisfaction is moderated by trip types; H8b: The relationship between affective destination image as part of destination branding and tourist satisfaction is moderated by trip types; H9: The relationship between perceived quality as part of destination branding and tourist satisfaction is moderated by trip types; H10a: The relationship between destination recognition as part of destination branding and tourist satisfaction is moderated by trip types; and H10b: The relationship between destination familiarity as part of destination branding and tourist satisfaction is moderated by trip types. This study divided trip types into nature-based trips and urban trips. Nature-based trip included outdoor trips (camping, hiking, rafting, fishing, etc.) and resort trips (beaches, skiing, etc), while urban trips included city trips (shop, entertainment, etc.), cultural/heritage trips, and theme park trips.

The findings supported H8a, 8b, and 10a. That is, trip type moderated the relationships between the cognitive destination image, affective destination image, and destination recognition, and tourist satisfaction. These results indicated that there are differences the relationships between the cognitive destination image, affective destination image, and destination recognition, and tourist satisfaction in terms of trip type. Specifically, while the impact of cognitive destination image and affective destination image on tourist satisfaction was stronger for nature-based trips than for urban trips, the influence of destination recognition on the satisfaction was negatively stronger for nature-based trip thans for urban trips.

5.3.2 Summary of the Discussion

In general, the findings of this study indicated that there were direct and indirect effects of some components of destination branding (cognitive destination image, affective destination image, and destination familiarity) on tourist loyalty, meaning that if destination has a favorable image and is familiar to tourists, tourists are willing to return to the destination in the future and to recommend the destination to family, relatives, and friends. Also, the findings showed that the satisfied tourists are likely to be more loyal to the destination. Satisfaction did fully mediate the effect of destination branding on tourist loyalty. Furthermore, findings suggested that because the result indicated the statistical significance of the moderating effects of the trip type (nature-based trips and urban trips), it showed that there were some meaningful moderating effects on the relationship between the dimensions of destination branding and tourist satisfaction.

5.4. IMPLICATIONS

5.4.1 Managerial Implications

Brands play an integral part in marketing strategy and are increasingly seen as valuable assets and sources of differentiation (Lim & O'Cass 2001). Changes in the tourism industry and competition among tourism destinations mean tourism destinations must be conceived as brands that have to be managed from a strategic point of view. However, since destination branding is a relatively new concept and academic investigation in this area is just beginning, the branding of certain destinations is regarded as complex at best and impossible at worst (Morgan Pritchard, and Pride, 2002). Williams and Palmer (1999) argued that the need for more research was critical in light of the observed difficulties in implementing destination branding.

Therefore, this study provided an integrated approach to understanding the relationship between destination branding and tourist behavior, and attempted to empirically test the structural relationships among the following constructs: destination image, perceived quality, destination awareness (elements of destination branding), tourist satisfaction, and tourist loyalty (elements of tourist behavior). As already mentioned, the findings revealed that tourist loyalty depended on satisfied tourists and recognizable destination branding. Furthermore, because destination branding enabled tourists to identify the image, perceived quality, and awareness of a destination, destination branding could influence tourist satisfaction and loyalty. The findings will help destination marketers to build more competitive tourism destinations.

The findings indicated that destination image perceived post-visit as part of destination branding influenced tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty, depending on the destination's capacity to provide experiences that correspond with their needs and fit the image they had of the destination. Furthermore, this study revealed that destination familiarity had a direct positive effect on tourist loyalty and an indirect positive effect on tourist loyalty through tourist satisfaction. That is, destination image and destination familiarity were direct antecedents of tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty.

The results above suggested that destination managers and marketers should not delay in taking a serious approach to destination image and destination familiarity. Even though it is not possible to control all the elements involved in forming the image of and familiarity with the destination, it is possible to manipulate some of them such as advertising, tourist information offices, public relations, travel agents and tour operators, promotional instruments and Internet-based destination marketing. Furthermore, destination managers should develop a well-designed logo of destinations which reflects the image of the destination and differentiates their destination from other competing destinations. Also, because tourists' own experience, or that of friends or relatives, is very important in forming their image of and familiarity with the destination, the efforts of destination marketers should aim at improving experiences that will result in improved image and familiarity. Tourism destinations must take special care of the image that they attempt to communicate and the quality of the services and products that they offer, as these will affect tourists' satisfaction and their intentions for future behavior (loyalty).

Another finding indicated that tourist loyalty was positively affected by tourist satisfaction with the experience of the destination. That is, satisfaction with travel experiences significantly contributed to tourist loyalty. Therefore, first, destination marketers should pay special attention to tourist satisfaction and complaint handling, because positive word-of-mouth and intention to return (tourist loyalty) are the result of satisfaction. Tourist satisfaction should be constantly monitored in order to identify problems and to make necessary modifications to enhance tourist satisfaction. In addition, complaints should be handled delicately and quickly to ensure satisfaction and positive word-of-mouth. Second, destination managers should provide much more benefits than costs to tourists in order enhance their loyalty to the destination. Finally, since satisfaction is determined to be a mediating construct between destination branding and destination loyalty, destination managers should establish a higher tourist satisfaction level to create positive post-purchase tourist behavior, in order to improve and sustain destination competitiveness.

The other finding revealed that there were differences in the relationships between cognitive destination image, affective destination image, and destination recognition, and tourist satisfaction in terms of trip types (nature-based trips and urban trips). For example, while the impact of cognitive destination image and affective destination image on tourist satisfaction was stronger for nature-based trips than for urban trips, the influence of destination familiarity on satisfaction was stronger for urban trips than for nature-based trips. Therefore, destination managers for outdoor destinations and resort destinations should more focus on the safety of tourists, cleanliness of the place and development of family-oriented programs in order to provide a favorable image to tourists. Also, they should develop the destinations to make tourists excited. On the other hand, destination marketers for cities, cultural/heritage destinations, and theme park destinations should increase the familiarity of their destination through advertising, advertising travel agents, promotional media, and Internet-based destination marketing tools.

Just as loyalty is the focus of a significant body in the general marketing, tourist loyalty to the destination becomes a fundamental strategic component for destination marketers (Bigne, Sanchez, & Sanchez, 2001). The ultimate goals of destination branding are identical to several important destination management objectives to attract tourists and expenditures to their respective destinations (Blain, Levy, & Ritchie, 2005). Destination branding concentrates on building long-term tourist loyalty and their preference. Therefore, destination branding should be focused on maintaining and enhancing tourist loyalty to ensure long-term destination success. Destination marketers and managers should design relationship management techniques and practices in order to build tourist loyalty within the context of destination branding.

5.4.2 Theoretical Implications

Many studies have recently attempted to contribute to the process of adapting and integrating branding concepts from the mainstream marketing literature into the tourism management literature, and more specifically, into the literature directly addressing the concerns of destination branding management. However, the previous studies about destination branding have not supported the same level of conceptual and measurement rigor that has characterized the generic field of branding and have not had a theoretical and conceptual framework (Ritchie & Ritchie 1998). Nevertheless, grounded in relationship marketing theory, brand equity theory, and signaling theory, this study provided a destination branding model. The destination branding model classifies the components of destination branding into destination image, perceived quality, and destination awareness, and focuses on identifying the relationship between destination branding and tourist behavior. Thus, the significant contribution of this study is to develop and empirically test a destination branding model and its relevant components from the perspectives of leisure tourists.

Because destination branding is a relatively new concept, there have been no apparent efforts to distinguish between formation of destination image and destination branding. For example, Mundt (2002) argued that branding seemed to be used as a replacement for image-building and the measures used to evaluate effectiveness of destination branding were not different from those of destination image. Thus, the term, destination branding might be “old wine in a new bottle.” However, this study provided the difference between destination image and destination branding by combining relationship marketing theory, brand equity theory, and signaling theory. That is, the concept of destination branding is much broader than that of destination image, which is defined as one of destination branding components in this study.

Previous studies empirically tested either the relationships among destination image, tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty, or the relationships among perceived quality, tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty respectively. However, this study provided an integrated approach to understanding the relationship between destination branding and tourist behavior, and attempted to extend the theoretical framework of the structural relationships among the components of destination branding, tourist satisfaction, and tourist loyalty, especially in the leisure tourism market. Thus, this study was intended to initiate the development of theoretical foundations for destination branding.

5.5 LIMITATIONS

As with any study, this study also has its limitations. First, the limitation of this study came from the boundaries that were set for the analysis of the proposed theoretical model, because this study focused on only leisure tourists and their most recent pleasure (leisure) trip. This indicates that only the relationship between destination branding and the behavior of leisure tourists who traveled recently to a destination for the purpose of pleasure was addressed. If the survey is expanded to include tourists who traveled for business, there can be different levels of influences of destination branding on tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty. Another perplexing problem was one of multipurpose trips. Generally, trip type as a moderating variable in this study made the inherent presumption that travel was for leisure (pleasure) trip. While straightforward business trips could and should be excluded, since there was no trip type choice, the mixing of business with pleasure purposes or mixing visiting friends and relatives with pleasure purposes made the issue of trip type choice a lot more complex.

Second, the results of this study could not be generalized due to the limited geographical coverage and the low response rate (15.6%). This study was focused only on the residents of Virginia. It is possible that if this study is conducted on the other residents of other states and countries, the magnitude and direction of the relationship between destination branding and tourist behavior may be different. Therefore, other states, countries and geographic regions should be explored and additional studies across several traveling populations should be conducted. Because this study had a 15.6% response rate, it might have had non-response bias, which is different distribution or opinion between respondents and non-respondents, even if this study indicated that there was no difference between early and late respondents in terms of demographic characteristics.

Third, this study was somewhat limited in the selection of observed indicators, variables, and constructs. Even though those observed indicators, variables, and constructs were selected on the basis of the literature review and researcher's observation, other critical variables and constructs (i.e. perceived value, destination personality, etc.) may exist to help achieve further insights of destination branding. And, the use of additional items while increasing the survey length, might improve the inherent reliability and validity of the measures used.

Fourth, this study was also limited in terms of longitudinal characteristics, which would make it possible to analyze the potential time-lag for the hypothesized relationships and structural model. This is because the data were collected from a six-week period. Each measurement item for the constructs can be refined and validated. This study might reflect ongoing transformations that could influence the relationships among the constructs for future research.

Subsequently, the limitation mentioned before should be considered as essential and critical suggestions for future research. Future studies should take into account these limitations to produce more complete research results.

5.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

Previous studies of destination branding have not provided a conceptual and empirically testable destination branding model which is related with tourist behavior. For example, there have been definitional problems and interchangeable use of the terms branding (destination branding) and brand image (destination image) at the conceptual level. The existing studies on the topic also empirically tested either the relationships among destination image, tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty, or the relationships among perceived quality, tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty respectively. However, those studies did not provide an integrated approach to the topic. Based on the combination of relationship marketing theory, brand equity theory, and signaling theory, this study employed an integrated approach to understanding the relationship between destination branding and tourist behavior, and attempted to extend the theoretical framework of the structural relationships among the components of destination branding, tourist satisfaction, and tourist loyalty especially in the leisure tourism market. This study was intended to initiate the development of theoretical foundations of destination branding. Therefore, future studies should build on the conceptual work that was provided by this study to further develop knowledge about destination branding.

The proposed model of the relationships among destination branding and tourist behavior was limited to the leisure tourism market. Replication of this study for targeting other tourism markets should be made in order to generate a more solid relationship among constructs in this study, since generalization of the results was limited. Such an application will help researchers to identify reliable indicators to measure constructs, and produce a more robust and stable model.

The model was tested and found to be acceptable by SEM. Better models than the model for this study may certainly exist. Thus, future research should examine the effects of the addition of other variables on the model and whether changing the direction of some of the paths may improve the model.

No information was provided on the effect of demographics and trip characteristics on the relationships among destination branding and tourist behavior. If this study included this information, the range of destinations evaluated would be quite wide, and this might have added another layer of complexity to the results. In that sense, future research should examine the moderating effects of demographic and trip characteristic information as valuable instruments for segmenting tourists or positioning destinations. Thus, future research can improve knowledge for both tourism consumer researchers and tourism strategic management.

5.7 CONCLUSIONS

This study has provided insight into understanding destination branding by developing and empirically testing a structural equation model of the relationship between destination branding and its relevant tourist behaviors from the perspectives of leisure tourists. The results of this study have provided some explanation for how tourist loyalty is influenced by destination branding (cognitive destination image, affective destination image, perceived quality, destination recognition, and destination familiarity), what the relationship between tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty is, and what the difference of the relationship between destination branding and tourist satisfaction is in terms of trip types.

Because this study was intended to initiate the development of theoretical foundations of the relationship among destination branding and tourist behavior, it is expected that this study will help researchers test and develop a stable model in order to generate a more solid relationship among destination branding and tourist behavior. Also, even though the results were exploratory in nature, it is hoped that the information provided and the implication of this study will help destination managers and marketers build competitive strategies in order to ensure long-term relationships between tourists and their destinations, and to enhance the relationship management techniques and practices in order to build tourist loyalty within the context of destination branding.

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Appendix A

Pre-test

1. Profile of the Pretest Sample

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender (N=95)		
Female	46	48.4
Male	49	51.6
Age (N=93)		
18-25	74	79.6
26-35	15	16.1
36-45	4	4.3
Education (N=95)		
Freshman	30	31.6
Sophomore	20	21.1
Junior	13	13.7
Senior	10	10.5
Masters	8	8.4
Ph. D.	14	14.7
Total Household Income (N=92)		
$30,000 or less	26	28.3
$30,001-50,000	12	13
$50,001-70,000	9	9.8
$70,001-90,000	7	7.6
$90,001-110,000	12	13.0
$110,000 or more	26	28.3
Types of Destination		
Natural Destination	37	38.9
Cultural/Heritage Destination	17	17.9
Recreational Destination	15	15.8
Entertainment Destination	24	25.3
Others	2	2.1
Trip Party		
Alone	4	4.2
A couple	12	12.6
Friends/Relatives	38	40.0
Family Members	34	35.8
Organization Group	6	6.3
Others	1	1.1
Length of Trip		
2-4 days	32	34.0
5-7 days	44	46.8
8-10 days	10	10.5
11 days or more	8	8.5

2. Factor Analysis Result of Destination Image (N=93)

Factors/Items	Cognitive Image	Affective Image
Factor I (Cognitive Image)		
This destination has high standards of cleanliness	.873	
This destination is very safe	.863	
This destination is very peaceful	.770	
This destination is family-oriented	.753	
This destination has a lot of friendly people	.520	
Factor II (Affective Image)		
This destination is arousing		.869
This destination is very exiting		.848
This destination is very pleasant		.611
This destination is relaxing		.550
Eigenvalue	4.119	1.695
Variance (%)	45.765	18.828
Cumulative Variance (%)	45.765	64.593
Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)	.835	.777

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis, Rotation Method: Varimax
KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy)= .792
Bartlett's test of sphericity: $\underline{p}$=.000 (X^2=385.635,*df*=36

3. Factor Analysis Result of Perceived Quality (N=93)

Items	Factor I
The quality of this destination is of high standard	.893
The quality of this destination is very reliable	.888
The quality of this destination is very consistent	.877
The quality of this destination is outstanding	.863
The quality of this destination is very dependable	.862
The quality of this destination is very favorable	.857
Eigenvalue	4.578
Variance (%)	76.304
Cumulative Variance (%)	76.304
Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)	.938

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis, Rotation Method: Varimax
KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy)= .862
Bartlett's test of sphericity: p=.000 (X^2=471.058,df=15)

4. Factor Analysis Result of Destination Awareness (N=91)

Factors/Items	Destination Recognition	Destination Familiarity
Factor I (Destination Recognition)		
This destination is very famous	.917	
This destination is very visible	.855	
I have heard a great deal about this destination	.754	
Factor II (Destination Familiarity)		
When I decide to travel, this destination comes to my mind first		.798
I am familiar with this destination		.781
This destination is quickly recalled among other competing destinations		.679
Some characteristics of this destination come to my mind quickly		.581
Eigenvalue	3.163	1.342
Variance (%)	45.184	19.178
Cumulative Variance (%)	45.184	64.363
Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)	.836	.784

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis, Rotation Method: Varimax
KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy)= .790
Bartlett's test of sphericity: $\underline{p}$=.000 (X^2=385.558,df=28)

5. Factor Analysis Result of Tourist Satisfaction (N=93)

Items	Factor I
This destination provides much more benefits than costs	.896
This destination is the best among other competing	.882
This destination is much better than what I expected	.830
Eigenvalue	2.270
Variance (%)	75.669
Cumulative Variance (%)	75.669
Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)	.837

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis, Rotation Method: Varimax
KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy)= .708
Bartlett's test of sphericity: $\underline{p}$=.000 (X^2=115.259,*df*=3)

6. Factor Analysis Result of Tourist Loyalty (N=93)

Items	Factor I
I encourage my friends/relatives to visit this destination	.913
I recommend this destination to other people who seek advice	.908
I will visit this destination again in the future	.818
I am willing to pay a higher price than other destinations	.745
Eigenvalue	2.882
Variance (%)	72.054
Cumulative Variance (%)	72.054
Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)	.837

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis, Rotation Method: Varimax
KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy)= .760
Bartlett's test of sphericity: $\underline{p}$=.000 (X^2=212.313,*df*=6)

Appendix B

Survey Cover Letter

Dear Participant:

As a doctorial student in the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management at Virginia Tech, I am working on my thesis on the subject of the relationship between destination branding and tourists' behavior in the leisure (pleasure) tourism market.

Enclosed is an important survey to assess your opinion about general issues related to image, quality, awareness, satisfaction, and loyalty of your most recent leisure travel destination. Your help will be greatly appreciated.

It will take approximately ten minutes of your time to complete this survey. Your participation in this survey is voluntary, and your response will remain confidential. Also, there are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions in this survey. You need only to express your feelings about how you see things in your most recent leisure travel.

Please complete this survey as soon as you can and return it in the pre-address and paid envelope. I would like to have the survey returned before March 20th, 2006 so that your response may be included in the final results. I appreciate your cooperation in this matter very much.

If you have any question regarding this survey, please feel free to contact Research Associate Jin Huh at 540-961-9153 or email jhuh@vt.edu.

Sincerely,

Jin Huh, Research Associate
Principal Investigator
Hospitality and Tourism Management
Virginia Tech

Muzaffer Uysal, Ph.D.
Professor
Hospitality and Tourism Management
Virginia Tech

Appendix C

Survey Instrument

Survey of Destination Branding and Tourist Perception

Part I. Your Most Recent Leisure (Pleasure) Trip. Please check the appropriate answer.

1. Have you traveled to any destination, more than two nights away from home, for the purpose of **LEISURE (PLEASURE)** in the past 18 months?
   - Yes (Please, continue)
   - No (Please, complete Part VII & VIII)

2. Did **your most recent trip destination** take place within the United States or abroad?
   Within the United States/domestic   Abroad/international

3. What is the name of the destination to which you have traveled? (Fill in all that apply)
   (City)_________ (State or Province)___________ (Country)___________

4. Which one of trip types best describes **your most recent trip destination**?
   - Outdoor trip (A natural area where you may engage in activities such as camping, hiking, rafting, fishing, etc.)
   - Resort trip (A resort area that has a variety of activities, such as beaches, skiing, tennis, golfing, etc.)
   - City trip (A city where you can shop, enjoy entertainment, visit museums and theaters, and/or just enjoy the city)
   - Cultural/Heritage trip (A trip taken mainly for the purpose of visiting a historical site or cultural attraction)
   - Theme park trip (A trip taken primarily for the purpose of visiting a major theme park)   Other: (Please, specify:________________)

5. How many days did you spend on **your most recent trip destination**? ____ day(s)?

6. Which of the following categories best describes your travel party?

   ☐ Alone ☐ A couple ☐ Friends/Relatives ☐ Family members

   ☐ Organized group ☐ Other:________

7. From what types of sources did you find information about **your most recent trip destination**? (check all that apply.)

   ☐ Travel agents ☐ Magazines/Books ☐ Newspapers ☐ Internet

   ☐ T.V. ☐ E-mail ad ☐ Friends/Relatives ☐Other:_____

Part II. Destination Image

The following statements are about Image of **Your Most Recent Leisure (Pleasure) Trip** destination. Please circle the appropriate number that indicates how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements (1= Strongly Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3= Neutral (N), 4= Agree (A), 5=Strongly Agree (SA)).

	SD	D	N	A	SA
1.This destination is very peaceful.	1	2	3	4	5
2.This destination is very safe.	1	2	3	4	5
3.This destination has beautiful scenery.	1	2	3	4	5
4.This destination has high standards of cleanliness.	1	2	3	4	5
5.This destination has a lot of friendly people.	1	2	3	4	5
6.This destination is family-oriented.	1	2	3	4	5
7.This destination is very pleasant.	1	2	3	4	5
8.This destination is very exciting.	1	2	3	4	5
9.This destination is relaxing.	1	2	3	4	5
10.This destination is arousing.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Overall, I feel very good about this destination.	1	2	3	4	5

Part III. Destination Awareness

The following statements are about Awareness of **Your Most Recent Leisure (Pleasure) Trip**. Please circle the appropriate number that indicates how much you agree or disagree with each of the statements.(1= Strongly Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3= Neutral (N), 4= Agree (A), 5=Strongly Agree (SA))

	SD	**D**	**N**	**A**	**SA**
1. I am very familiar with this destination.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I have heard a great deal about this destination.	1	2	3	4	5
3. This destination is very visible.	1	2	3	4	5
4. This destination is very famous.	1	2	3	4	5
5. When I decide to travel, this destination comes to my mind first.	1	2	3	4	5
6. This destination is quickly recalled among other competing destinations.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Some characteristics of this destination come to my mind quickly.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Overall, I am aware very of this destination very well.	1	2	3	4	5

Part IV. Perceived Quality

The following statements are about Perceived Quality of **Your Most Recent Leisure (Pleasure) Trip** destination. Please circle the appropriate number that indicates how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements (1= Strongly Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3= Neutral (N), 4= Agree (A), 5=Strongly Agree (SA)).

	SD	**D**	**N**	**A**	**SA**
1. The quality of this destination is outstanding.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The quality of this destination is very reliable.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The quality of this destination is very dependable.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The quality of this destination is very consistent.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The quality of this destination is of high standard.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The quality of this destination is very favorable.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Overall, this destination offers excellent service.	1	2	3	4	5

Part V. Satisfaction

The following statements are about Satisfaction with **Your Most Recent Leisure (Pleasure) Trip** destination. Please circle the appropriate number that indicates how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements (1= Strongly Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3= Neutral (N), 4= Agree (A), 5=Strongly Agree (SA)).

	SD	**D**	**N**	**A**	**SA**
1. This destination is much better than what I expected.	1	2	3	4	5
2. This destination provides much more benefits than costs.	1	2	3	4	5
3. This destination is the best among other competing destinations.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Overall, I am very satisfied with this destination.	1	2	3	4	5

Part VI. Loyalty

The following statements are about loyalty of **Your Most Recent Leisure (Pleasure) Trip** destination. Please circle the appropriate number that indicates how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements **(**1= Strongly Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3= Neutral (N), 4= Agree (A), 5=Strongly Agree (SA)).

	SD	**D**	**N**	**A**	**SA**
1. I will visit this destination again in the future.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I recommend this destination to other people who seek advice.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I encourage my friends/relatives to visit this destination.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I am willing to pay a higher price than other destinations.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Overall, I consider myself to be loyal to this destination.	1	2	3	4	5

Part VII. Demographic and Behavioral Information

Please check or write the appropriate answer. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential and will be only used for statistical purposes.

♦ **Sex**: ☐ Female ☐ Male ♦ **Age**: __________ years old

♦ **Marital Status**: ☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Widowed ☐ Divorced ☐ Separated

♦ **Education (what was the last year of school you completed?)**:

Grade School	High school	College/University	Graduate School
1 2 3 4 5 6	7 8 9 10 11 12	F S J S	MS Ph.D.

♦ **Total Household Income** (before Tax)

☐ $30,000 or less ☐ $30,001-$50,000 ☐ $50,001-$70,000

☐ $70,001-90,000 ☐ $90,001-110,000 ☐ $110,001 or more

♦ **Ethnic Group**: ☐ Caucasian ☐ African-American ☐ Hispanic

☐ Asian ☐ Native American ☐ Other:_______

♦ **Travel Personality Type**: "Psychocentrics" are defined as travelers who are rather self-inhibited and non-adventuresome on vacation. "Allocentrics" are defined as those who enjoy trying a wide variety of pursuits and challenges while on vacation.

Please circle on the following grid in the location that best describes your travel personality.

Psychocentric ____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:____ Allocentric

****** Thank you very much for your feedback! ******

Appendix D

Number of Survey Recipients assigned to each county and city of Virginia

Counties & Cities	Population	Target sample
Accomack County	38,305	11
Albemarle County	79,236	22
Alleghany County	12,926	4
Amelia County	11,400	3
Amherst County	31,894	9
Appomattox County	13,705	4
Arlington County	189,453	54
Augusta County	65,615	19
Bath County	5,048	1
Bedford County	60,371	17
Bland County	6,871	2
Botetourt County	30,496	9
Brunswick County	18,419	5
Buchanan County	26,978	8
Buckingham County	15,623	4
Campbell County	51,078	14
Carolina County	22,121	6
Charles City County	6,926	2
Charlotte County	12,472	4
Chesterfield County	259,903	73
Clarke County	12,652	4
Craig County	5,091	1
Culpeper County	34,262	10
Cumberland County	9,017	3
Dickenson County	16,395	5
Dinwiddie County	24,533	7
Essex County	9,989	3
Fairfax County	969,749	274
Fauquier County	55,139	16
Floyd County	13,874	4
Fluvanna County	20,047	6
Franklin County	47,286	13
Frederick County	59,209	17
Giles County	16,657	5
Gloucester County	34,780	10
Goochland County	16,863	5
Grayson County	17,917	5
Greene County	15,244	4
Greensvile County	11,560	3
Halifax County	37,355	11
Hanover County	86,320	24

Counties & Cities	Population	Target sample
Henrico County	262,300	74
Henry County	57,930	16
Highland County	2,536	1
Isle of Wight County	29,728	8
James City County	48,102	14
King and Queen County	6,630	2
King George County	16,803	5
King William County	13,146	4
Lancaster County	11,567	3
Lee County	23,589	7
Loudoun County	169,599	48
Louisa County	25,627	7
Lunenburg County	13,146	4
Madison County	12,520	4
Mathews County	9,207	3
Mecklenburg County	32,380	9
Middlesex County	9,932	3
Montgomery County	83,629	24
Nelson County	14,445	4
New Kent County	13,462	4
Northampton County	13,093	4
Northumberland County	12,259	3
Nottoway County	12,725	4
Orange County	25,881	7
Page County	23,177	7
Patrick County	19,407	5
Pittsylvania County	61,745	17
Powhatan County	22,377	6
Prince Edward County	19,720	6
Prince George County	33,047	9
Prince William County	280,813	79
Pulaski County	35,127	10
Rappahannock County	6,983	2
Richmond County	8,809	2
Roanoke County	85,778	24
Rockbridge County	20,808	6
Rockingham County	67,725	19
Russell County	30,308	9
Scott County	23,403	7
Shenandoah County	35,075	10
Smyth County	33,081	9
Southampton County	17,482	5
Spotsylvania County	90,395	26
Stafford County	92,446	26
Surry County	6,829	2

Counties & Cities	Population	Target sample
Sussex County	12,504	4
Tazewell County	44,598	13
Warren County	31,584	9
Washington County	51,103	14
Westmoreland County	16,718	5
Wise County	40,123	11
Wythe County	27,599	8
York County	56,297	16
Alexander City	128,283	36
Bedford City	6,299	2
Bristol City	17,367	5
Buena Vista City	6,349	2
Charlottesvile City	45,049	13
Chesapeake City	199,184	56
Clifton Forge City	4,289	1
Colonial Heights City	16,897	5
Covington City	6,303	2
Danvile City	48,411	14
Emporia City	5,665	2
Fairfax City	21,498	6
Falls Church City	10,377	3
Franklin City	8,346	2
Fredericksburg City	19,279	5
Galax City	6,837	2
Hampton City	146,437	41
Harrisonburg City	40,468	11
Hopewell City	22,354	6
Lexington City	6,867	2
Lynchburg City	65,269	18
Manassas City	35,135	10
Manassas Park City	10,290	3
Martinsvile City	15,416	4
Newport News City	180,150	51
Norfolk City	234,403	66
Norton City	3,904	1
Petersburg City	33,740	10
Poquoson City	11,566	3
Portsmouth City	100,565	28
Radford City	15,859	4

Counties & Cities	Population	Target sample
Richmond City	197,790	56
Roanoke City	94,911	27
Salem City	24,747	7
Staunton City	23,853	7
Suffolk City	63,677	18
Virginia Beach City	425,257	120
Waynesboro City	19,520	6
Williamsburg City	11,998	3
Winchester City	23,585	7
All Counties and Cities	**7,7078,515**	**2,000**

Appendix E

Individual items of the constructs with means, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis

Variables	Mean	SD	Skew.	Kurt.
Destination Image				
The destination is very peaceful	3.79	1.08	-.68	-.38
The destination is very safe	3.86	.93	-.64	.09
The destination has high standards of cleanliness	3.84	.82	-.42	-.07
The destination has a lot of friendly people	3.99	.77	-.38	-.28
The destination is family-oriented	3.88	.92	-.56	-.12
The destination is very pleasant.	4.25	.69	-.69	.53
The destination is very exciting.	3.88	.91	-.39	-.70
The destination is relaxing.	3.98	.87	-.57	-.35
The destination is arousing	3.52	.97	-.08	-.48
Perceived Quality				
The quality of this destination is outstanding	3.99	.75	-.51	.19
The quality of this destination is very reliable	4.00	.70	-.48	.83
The quality of this destination is very dependable	3.94	.69	-.36	.61
The quality of this destination is very consistent	3.91	.76	-.59	.88
The quality of this destination is of a high standard	3.88	.80	-.62	.91
The quality of this destination is very favorable	4.05	.74	-.49	.61
Destination Awareness				
I am very familiar with the destination	3.68	1.19	-.55	-.79
I have heard a great deal about this destination	3.99	1.03	-.83	-.13
This destination is very visible	3.91	1.03	-.80	.05
This destination is very famous	3.87	1.16	-.77	-.37
When I decide to travel, this destination comes to my mind first	3.05	1.08	-.06	-.59
This destination is quickly recalled among other competing destinations	3.66	1.04	-.52	-.29
Some characteristics of this destination come to my mind quickly	4.14	.81	-1.11	1.91
Tourist Satisfaction				
The destination is much better than what I expected	3.54	.89	-.04	-.46
The destination provides much more benefits than costs	3.47	.91	.01	-.68
The destination is the best among other competing destinations	3.44	.91	-.13	-.22
Tourist Loyalty				
I will visit the destination again in the future	4.08	.97	-1.11	1.01
I recommend the destination to other people who seek advice	4.09	.86	-1.02	1.18
I encourage my friends/relatives to visit the destination	4.01	.91	-.80	.35
I am willing to pay a higher price than other destinations	3.09	1.05	.80	-.40

Appendix F

Vitae

Jin Huh (Ph.D)

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AREAS OF INTEREST IN RESEARCH AND TEACHING

Tourism marketing, International tourism marketing, Hospitality and tourism marketing, Tourist behavior and motivation, Destination branding, Tourism analysis, Research methodology in hospitality and tourism

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy in Hospitality and Tourism Management
Virginia Tech. Blacksburg, Virginia, June 2006
Major: Tourism Management
Minor: Research Methods in Hospitality and Tourism
Dissertation: Destination Branding as an Informational Signal and its Influence on Satisfaction and Loyalty in the Leisure Tourism Market

Master of Science in Hospitality and Tourism Management
Virginia Tech. Blacksburg, Virginia, June 2002
Major: Tourism Management
Thesis: Tourist Satisfaction with Cultural/heritage Site: Virginia Historic Triangle

Master of Science in Hospitality Management (Transfer)
Florida International University, FL, May 1999
Major: Hotel Management

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration
Kyung Hee University, Seoul, Korea, February 1998
Major: Business Administration

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Instructor (January-May, 2004 & July-August, 2004)
HTM 2454 Travel and Tourism Management
Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Virginia Tech, Virginia, USA

Graduate Teaching Assistant (August, 2000-December, 2003 & August-Dec., 2004)

Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Virginia Tech, Virginia, USA
HTM 1414 Introduction to Hospitality and Tourism Management
HTM 2454 Travel and Tourism Management
HTM 2464 Introduction to Service
HTM 2474 Introduction to Meeting and Convention Management
HTM 2984 Private Club Management
Project of Dept. of Hospitality and Tourism Management (Dr. Michael Olsen)

Sales and Marketing Assistant (November, 2001-March, 2002)
Shenandoah Club, Roanoke, Virginia, USA

PUBLICATIONS

Papers in Refereed Journals

Huh, J., Uysal, M., & McCleary, K. (2006). Cultural/heritage Destinations: Tourist Satisfaction and Market Segmentation. *Journal of Hospitality and Leisure Marketing*, 14(3): 81-99.

Huh, J. & Hahm, S. (2006). Major Forces Driving Change and Competitive Methods in the Low-cost Airline Industry: Southwest Airlines and JetBlue Airways Cases. *Korean Journal of Hospitality Administration*, 15(1): 367-380.

Hyun, S., Huh, J., & Hahm, S. (2005). Data Mining System in the Service Industry: Dephi Study. *Korea Industrial Information System Society*, 10(4)

Huh, J. & Uysal, M. (2003). Satisfaction with cultural/heritage sites: Virginia Historic Triangle. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & tourism*, 4(3/4): 177-194

Publications in Refereed Proceedings

Huh, J., Uysal, M., & McCleary, K. (2005). Satisfaction Based on Market Segmentation for a Cultural/heritage destination. *36th TTRA Annual Conference Proceedings, Travel and Tourism Research Association*, 186-190.

Huh, J. & Uysal, M. (2003). Tourist Satisfaction with Cultural/heritage Site: The Virginia Historic Triangle. *34th TTRA Annual Conference Proceedings, Travel and Tourism Research Association*.

Publications in Non-refereed Proceeding

Lee, H., Huh, J., & Park, K. (2004). Virginia Tech Students? Satisfaction with On-campus Housing. *20th Annual Research Symposium at Virginia Tech*.

AWARDS AND GRANTS

Graduate Research Development Project (2006). Virginia Tech Graduate Student Association

Master's Student Research Award (2003). Travel and Tourism Research Association

The Washington Metro Area Travel Marketing Executives/TTRA Harvey M. Shields Memorial Research Proposal Award (2001)

UNIVERSITY AND PUBLIC SERVICE

Reader (January-August, 2002)
Worked for disabled person (partially blind) and conducted research project (Human Resource Management in Hospitality Industry).

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

TTRA, Travel and Tourism Research Association
PCMA, Professional Conventional Management Association.